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PREPARING WHITE TEACHERS TO TEACH IN RACIALLY DIVERSE SCHOOLS

By

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A Capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts in Education.

Hamline University

Saint Paul, Minnesota

May 2017

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I would like to dedicate my capstone to my mother Loretta who was my first teacher and who has spent countless hours supporting me along my educational journey, to Del (my second mother) who has encouraged and inspired me throughout my journey and has taught me how to be better writer, and lastly, I want to dedicate my thesis to my students who often feel like their voices are not heard but are resilient and never give up hope. They are my hope.

"It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences."
-Audre Lorde

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Introduction

Overview

Minnesota's teacher workforce is predominantly White while the large metro area of the Twin Cities has a racially diverse student body. In Minnesota, 96% of teachers are White, and they teach students 29% whom are of color. In Minneapolis 67% of students are of color and 84% of teachers are White (educators4excellence.org). As a White teacher in Minneapolis, I am choosing to focus on an area related to racial equity, specifically the effective preparation of and support for White teachers to teach in racially diverse classrooms.

For this thesis, I propose to investigate *what core knowledge; essential skills and experiences White teachers believe have effectively prepared them to teach racially diverse students?* I came to be interested in this because I did not become racially aware until later on in my career. In this chapter I will present my journey and story as a White female educator.

Specifically, I will compare their perceptions of development of racial equity awareness at two points: teachers with one year or less of teaching experience and teachers with at least five years of teaching experience that have completed Peer Assistance and Review (PAR) mentoring. The research data that I collect has the potential to inform local universities, K-12 schools, and their PAR programs to make

necessary changes to prepare and support new White teachers to teach racially diverse students. I also propose that this data launch ongoing workshops that are embedded in teachers' PAR trainings and teacher education trainings.

Rationale

The roots of racial inequality run deep in this country's history. "The United States was founded by White men on the idea of all citizens' entitlement to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness although 'citizens' did not include people of color" (Darling-Hammond, 2010, p. 28). Remnants of White colonial beliefs and systems are covertly and overtly interwoven in segregated schools.

In the 1920's and 30's W.E.B Dubois and Booker T. Washington argued that African Americans should be "classically trained to think critically so they can become leaders" and opposed those who argued that, "African Americans should be trained for menial jobs" (Darling-Hammond, 2010, p. 28). There have been steps to make progressive change in our system, like the victory with Brown vs. Board of education in 1954, but there is still work to be done. Brown vs. Board was an important decision but it certainly was not perfect. Many Black teachers were let go and integrating schools was dangerous.

Inequities have played out over many historical eras for racial and ethnic groups, immigrants, refugees and the poor, and this issue is still relevant today. Minnesota also has one of the largest opportunity gaps between Black/Brown students and White students. There is an unequal and inequitable distribution of resources and educational opportunities creating disparities between these two groups.

Racial equity is only one of many points of discussion with new teachers, but it is not an urgent topic that teacher preparatory programs and mentorship programs are trying to tackle to prepare new teachers. I hypothesize that new White teachers do not have enough, or in some cases any, tools in their toolbox to work with diverse students in ways that could change racial disparities. I will examine three areas that are critical factors to teachers' preparation and ongoing training related to racial equity including; 1) exposure to in-depth study of pedagogy, 2) examination of personal, unconscious biases, and 3) immersion and understanding of local cultures. Changes in these areas will lead educators to be sensitive and thoughtful when planning curricula that reflect their students.

I hope to learn what racial equity programs or trainings Minneapolis Public Schools has implemented or is providing for new teachers to dismantle systemic racial inequities. Furthermore, I would like to know how beginning and experienced White teachers perceive their teacher prep program which may have or have not prepared them to teach in schools that are racially diverse.

Context

Both my personal and professional experiences have contributed to my awareness of and strong interest in the preparation needed to teach racially diverse students. As a White woman growing up in Iowa I did not often notice race until middle school and high school. In my freshman year of high school I was assigned to a remedial math course. My math teacher was one of the two Black teachers I had during my high school career. I was one of two White students, and the rest of my peers were students of color. I remember noticing this difference and wondering why there were not more White students. It wasn't until later that I began to go deeper in my understanding of race.

While attending Saint Catherine University, I had more experiences that led me to become passionate about social and racial justice issues. One of the first courses that helped me to reflect and take action on some social issues was "The Reflective Woman" in which I read literature about social and racial injustices around the world.

I also took a course titled, "Teachers as Leaders for a Changing Society." This course examined historical and current issues from a social justice lens that impacts students and their families in K-12 education (www.stkate.edu). In this course we scanned the topic of race. I remember reading Beverly Tatum's book, "Why are all the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?" Other than reading this text I do not remember any significant study of race. There was no opportunity to reflect about identity development as a White woman, thus, better preparing me to teach in racially diverse schools. I later studied women's health in Cuernavaca, Mexico in another course, "The Global Search for Justice." There I observed multiple injustices including poverty, gender, and ethnic inequalities. This course helped me to reflect and understand that many of the same issues in Mexico also affect members of my own community.

In retrospect, I know that these educational experiences did not prepare me to teach racially diverse students and face racial inequities. I was not taught about unconscious bias or how to create equitable curriculum. I did develop a strong sense that I wanted to teach curriculum that reflected my students, to build community partnerships to enhance that curriculum, and to have multiple perspectives represented and heard in my classroom. As a result, I requested to do my student teaching at Creative Arts High School, an alternative school that was in a neighborhood called Frog-town in Saint Paul, Minnesota. This is an area in Saint Paul where immigrants have historically settled and

still do today where many people of varied ethnic and racial backgrounds live. My experience at Creative Arts High School was transformative. I learned that curriculum could be experiential and narratives could be taught that were not usually found in textbooks.

During my senior year of college, I became an AmeriCorps volunteer. I chose to work at North High School in Minneapolis because of the school's rich history and strong community. North Minneapolis was first settled by a large Jewish population and later transitioned into a largely Black community. The North Minneapolis community faced similar social issues as the people in Cuernavaca such as housing segregation, poverty, limited resources, and racial discrimination. I taught a photography course as an after-school program for North High students. In the process, I realized how segregated our school district was and how resources were unequally distributed. I was able to provide a space for students to experience another form of art that they otherwise would not have. I was trying to bridge a gap and dismantle inequities in our educational system. My own personal student experience in high school and college have led me to the professional positions and interests that I have had and hold today.

My first full-time teaching position was with the Minneapolis Urban League teaching visual art to students ages 14-21 in an alternative school setting. I was immersed in writing curriculum, developing relationships with my students, and simply surviving the first two years of teaching. Consequently, I was not able to address bigger systemic issues that my students faced. I was aware that many students faced poverty, homelessness, violence, and other barriers that stem from inequities related to race. I wanted to provide experiences that they otherwise would not have, so I began to create

curriculum that reflected who they were. At this point in my career, I lacked self-awareness about my own racial consciousness and biases, but I understood that policies and resources were not equitable within the same district. This understanding stemmed from the yearly professional development (PD) session for visual art teachers in the district. I learned quickly which schools had access to supplies and resources and which ones had less. Although this PD workshop was not focused on racial equity I knew that I wanted to gain more knowledge about my career and district.

After two years at the Urban League I was laid off due to budget cuts. One year later, I started teaching Literacy Arts courses at Edison High School. At that point, I clearly recognized that racial inequities existed. All but one of my students identified as students of color and read below the 20th percentile. During my first year as a Minneapolis school district employee I was assigned a Peer Assistance Review (PAR) mentor. My mentor provided support and suggestions for my classes, but I do not remember having any training or PD about social or racial inequities. At the end of the school year, Edison's budgets were reduced and I was cut. By now I wanted to work at a school where social justice was a focus. I was hired as a full-time art teacher at Washburn High School where I currently teach. During my first year at Washburn High School (WHS) I became deeply interested in racial equity work. WHS wanted a safe space for youth to talk about race particularly after a Black baby doll was hung by a noose in a stairwell in the school. I knew that my students wanted to process and discuss this racist incident. So, another colleague and I recruited and built a small team of student leaders that formed a "Dare 2 Be Real" (D2BR) group. D2BR is an anti-racism program started by Dr. Patrick Duffy at Hopkins High School. As a group we examine three perspectives

on race and anti-racism; including who we were, who we are, and who we want to be. As an advisor to the group, I spend time examining my own racial consciousness because racial equity has become a personal priority.

I had to shift my thinking and deepen understanding about race to provide a supportive space for my students. Fortunately, Dr. Duffy and other anti-racism leaders have guided me through my experiences while I have been leading D2BR. They suggested valuable trainings, conferences, and literature that have helped me to build my knowledge and skills as an anti-racist leader. Not until I received training in my third and fourth year of teaching did I understand how inadequately prepared I was. It is sad that I had to wait that long to start becoming racially conscious.

As I continue to grow and reflect on my racial consciousness and awareness, I want to learn about other White teachers' experiences in racially diverse schools and what skills have or have not provided racial equity training in their first years in K-12 education. I hope that my educational research contributes to changes in educational programs that will support all teachers to be racial equity leaders and to meet the needs of all students.

Summary

This pilot study will provide insight into White teachers' experiences and their perceptions of the training and support programs that have or have not prepared them to teach to racially diverse students. In addition, my research results may suggest changes in the PAR mentoring, PD and pre-service educational programs that are needed to put racial equity at the core of this work. This can be done by finding previously researched

ideologies, strategies, and resources that have proven to be most effective for teachers in alleviating racial inequity in education.

In Chapter Two I will present literature and provide background information on theories and practices that have been studied and learned by researchers so that the skill set of White teachers can be improved. I will focus on Critical Race Theory (CRT) as an over arching concept that incorporates knowledge and skills needed by White teachers who will be teaching racially diverse students. Under the CRT umbrella comes Critical White Studies, colorblind ideology, racial realism, equity literacy and culturally responsive teaching practices.

Finally, Chapter Two will summarize and provide theoretical foundation for qualitative research methods in chapter three. Chapter three will present the methods used to interview White teachers in Minneapolis Public Schools to determine their awareness and understanding of those theories and practices. In Chapter Four I will present the results of my surveys and interviews, and ultimately in Chapter Five I will recommend resources to improve racial equity in educational programs.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Overview

The current state of the United States and the world is troubling due to the major inequities that are occurring. The United States (U.S.) Census Bureau estimates that 38% of people of color in 2025 and 50% in 2050 will make up the nation's population. The U.S. is experiencing and influx of immigration and Islam is the fastest growing religion (Howard, 2006, pg. ix). These facts cannot be ignored.

Gary Howard (2006) begs the question, "Is there causal relationship between the over representation of White teachers in our classrooms and the under performance of children of color in our nation's schools" (pg. 4). Education programs and school districts must understand that diversity is not a choice and is not going to go away. Because the majority of our teacher population is White it is clear that teacher preparation programs must prepare White teachers to teach in racially diverse schools. Howard (2006) suggests that we are not engaged sufficiently in a deep analysis of the root causes of White dominance and that White educators must be personally be moved and transformed to make systematic changes otherwise there is little hope that major racial equity changes will occur (pg.6) It is time for educators to face current, past and present issues of race, equity, and social issues.

Introduction

It is imperative that White teachers who plan to or currently teach in racially diverse schools develop core knowledge and skills that will allow them to be effective teachers in their environment. There are several major theories and educational practices related to racial attitudes and ideologies that support the development of racial consciousness for teachers. By reviewing the literature on five theories and/or concepts, I will focus on components of race awareness that should be part of the knowledge and skill base of effective teachers. Specifically, I am examining the historical context and main ideas of Critical Race Theory (CRT), racial realism, Critical White Studies (CWS), colorblind ideology, and equity literacy.

This body of knowledge offers indicators of essential content needed for optimal teacher education related to racial diversity and racial equity. With this background of theory and recommended practices as a foundation, I will be prepared to investigate my research question: *What core knowledge, essential skills, and experiences do White teachers believe have effectively prepared them to teach racially diverse students?*

In each of the following sections of this chapter, I will 1) define a theory or concept and describe its historical development, 2) examine its evolution in the present and its application to current situations, and 3) identify its implications for my Capstone research study. I will note comparisons and (where it occurs) convergence of these theories and concepts associated with effective teacher preparation. I will draw connections across them to identify the foundational knowledge, skills, and practices that support teacher effectiveness in a racially diverse education environment.

Critical Race Theory

Background. Critical Race Theory (CRT) began in the 1970s as a movement of activists and scholars who studied and transformed the relationship between race, racism, and power. According to Delgado (2001), "ideology stemmed from civil rights activists and leaders. However, the tenets of CRT include economics, history, context, group and self-interest, feelings and the unconscious" (p.3). CRT asserts that we must understand that covert and overt racism are real, and they create a pervasive, constructed systemic issue for our society.

Originally a movement within the field of law, CRT later expanded into other disciplines including education. During the 1990's education scholars began using CRT concepts and theories to understand the foundation of racism in educational policies. CRT expert's use the ideas of systemic racism to stress how deeply rooted racism is in schools (Young, 2011). Educators have applied CRT ideas "to understand issues of school discipline and hierarchy, tracking, controversies over curriculum and history, and IQ and achievement testing." (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001, p.3).

Current Relevance. Critical Race Theory (CRT) is now an overarching theory with many associated ideologies. The basic CRT tenets that I am examining are racism as the norm, interest convergence (associated with Racial Realism), and the social construction of race (associated with CWS).

Rector-Arranda (2016) notes that racism is ordinary and pervasive in our daily lives. It is embedded in our cultural consciousness and institutions (p. 3). White supremacy is historically rooted and is defined as "the oppression and exploitation of continents, nations and people of color by White people for the purpose of maintaining

the political, economic, and social power over non-White people (Martinez, 1998). White supremacy and racism are regularly encountered in our lives, behaviors, and practices and continue to be perpetuated by even well intentioned citizens through stereotypes and ingrained implicit biases.

Overt racism shows up in multiple ways in our society. Delgado and Stefancic (2001) state that "studies show Blacks and Latinos who seek loans, homes, or jobs are much more apt than similarly qualified Whites to be rejected, often for vague reasons. The U.S. prison populations are largely Black and Brown, and high-level jobs are almost all White." (p. 10). CRT challenges the assumption that racism is no longer a social concern because the civil rights movement changed Jim Crow laws and a Black president has been elected.

In education, segregation is evident in many ways. Tracking, high referral and suspension rates of students of color and other inequitable practices are relegated to an inferior practice. "It is crucial that educators recognize how the things that happen in schools affect the outcomes and practices of other public institutions and the larger society, but first they must demonstrate and accept that racism is still real, common and endemic in education" (Rector-Arranda, 2016, p. 3).

Capstone Significance. CRT is the theoretical foundation for this literature review. CRT has been pivotal for theorists. It has allowed them to pull together historical and present ideas about race and has created space for other theorists and researchers to critique and apply what they come to understand about race and racism. If we cannot see basic inequities, the issue of racism will continue to grow and fester. White teachers need to acquire and demonstrate a deep understanding of how racism continues to be pervasive

across social and educational systems, and how racism has assumed a level of normality because it often benefits the dominant White cultural group. This contributes to contemporary issues of educational equity.

The racial idealists and the racial realists in two ways have interpreted critical Race Theory. The realists believed in ideas that seemed most relevant to the classroom in terms of confronting the realities that teachers face.

Racial Realism

Background. Racial Realists led the development of CRT. They believe that racism is a way to obtain privileges and status if one is part of the dominant group. Race is a social construction made up to benefit the dominant group. (Delgado & Sefancic, 2001). Scientists grouped people together based on physical traits even though 99.9% of our genetics are similar (Oliver, 2013). Racial realist Derrick Bell proposed the idea of interest convergence. White people will support and act on racial justice issues when there is something in it for them. He would go on to say that "civil rights advances for Blacks always coincided with changing economic conditions and the self-interest of elite Whites" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p. 18).

Bell would later add that interest convergence is a way to make change, when the change will possibly benefit a person or group; an example is Brown v. Board of Education, one of the landmark cases in education. School segregation ended with that U.S. Supreme Court decision in 1954 but for whose benefit? According to Rector-Arranda, "It was a matter of what Whites stood to gain by such a decision more than tending to the civil rights of the Black Americans" (p. 9).

Current Relevance. Today Brown and Black students can legally attend the same schools. But is that the reality? School zones and district lines are put in place so that students can go to their neighborhood schools, but neighborhoods have often been divided and segregated due to housing policies, costs and loans. Therefore, when neighborhoods are segregated, so are the schools. High performing schools have tended to receive more community and district support with the results that disadvantaged schools receive fewer resources.

After the Brown v. Board of Education decision of 1955, many Black teachers lost their jobs. Often, "White teachers who did not have much practice teaching in the classroom took their positions" (Rector-Arranda, 2016). Teachers of color lost their jobs while most White teachers kept their teaching positions. This is evident today. 81.9 % of teachers in the 2011-2012 school year identified as White (NCES, 2011). Brown vs. Board created other barriers that serve to benefit Whites.

Many of the current standardized tests that largely measure intelligence are based on relevant representation of the White culture, which creates an advantage for White students and a disadvantage for students of color. Students need to see themselves in all curriculum including standardized tests otherwise an inequity is created in the curriculum. "Many teachers hold particularly low expectations of African-American and Latino students, treat them more harshly than other students, discourage their achievement and punish them disproportionately" (Darling-Hammond, 2010, p.208).

Capstone Implications. Are educators aware of and prepared to act on these systemic problems? Racial realists recognize that racism will never completely go away, but must instead be seen for what it is, so that confronting it becomes its own form of

empowerment. (Rector-Arranda, 2016, p.13). White teachers need to be prepared with skills and practices to challenge the idea of racial "equality," such as dialogue and space for multiple perspectives, curricula that allows for absent narratives, alternative and genuine assessment that focuses on growth over time versus an immediate answer, and the implementation of classroom policies that allows for advancement of all rather than favoring White students.

Once teachers begin to understand the issues around racism it is important for them to acknowledge their personal role and responsibility in those issues. The concepts of Critical White Studies offer the chance to develop this insight.

Critical White Studies

Background. For hundreds of years scientists who have studied people and cultures have focused on non-White groups. Critical White Studies (CWS) emerged from CRT when a progressive group of scientists proposed the idea that race is a social construct and began to question the place of Whiteness within those studies (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Whiteness is described as normative, and groups such as Latino, Native American, Asian American, and African American are considered non-White and thus not "the norm". The legal definition of Whiteness was originally formed through immigration law, so the judicial system was able to decide who had the privilege of living in the United States. Whites were privileged over those of color in this system as well. At the same time extremist groups like the Aryan Nation, neo-Nazis, and the Ku Klux Klan have taken an extremist stance in regard to White norms. White power and White supremacy emerged when dominant groups of people came together for a cause at the expense of minorities.

For a period of time in U.S. history, ethnic groups such as Jews, Italians, and the Irish were considered non-White. Much like African Americans, they were treated as second-class citizens or worse. Those groups exemplify that social perception of Whiteness can shift and change. Over time, they earned privileges by participating in politics, earning social standing with other elites, and gaining monetary wealth like other White ethnic groups (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001, p.77). Their White skin allowed them to do this.

Current Relevance. The ideas and theories of Whiteness, white privilege, and Critical White Studies (CWS) are connected by their assertion that privileges and advantages are based on having light or White skin color. CWS is a social construct that refers to the "advantages, benefits, and courtesies that come with being a member of the dominant culture" (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001). White privilege is woven throughout the cloth of our American culture, and the pattern is even more complex. Some people of color who have light skin tones and have been identified as White have actively or passively allowed society to classify them as White, so they can achieve the normative privileges of that group (Singleton, 2013)—privileges that will enable them to advance like their White peers. "Passing" shows how demeaning the construction of race is and how difficult for people of color to navigate, insisting they deny their culture and skin tone in order to participate as equals. In contrast, if a person of color, often Asians who conform to White norms they might be seen as the "model minority" or "acting White" which perpetuates and reinforces the ideal standard of White norms in our society yet encourages to deny their heritage. For example, societal Whiteness is invisible and unmarked but part of CWS. "The institutionalization of Whiteness is described as 'being'

White because bodies, ideologies, and beliefs overtake the spaces of others who are not the majority" (Ahmed, 2007, p.157). We are taught that racism is bad and to recognize overt acts of racism, but we do not grow up to see the invisible systems that dominate minority groups.

One of the ways of describing Whiteness and White privilege has been developed by Peggy McIntosh, feminist and anti-racism activist (1989). She listed 50 ways that White privilege comes into our daily lives. "I have chosen conditions which I think attach somewhat more to skin-color privilege than to class, religion, ethnic status or geographic location, even though all of these factors are intricately intertwined. Some of these 'I' statements include 'If I need to move, I can be pretty sure of renting or purchasing housing in an area which I can afford and in which I want to live,' as well as 'I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race'" (p.2) Can White educators *see* the inequities their privilege perpetuates reading McIntosh's statements? It calls teachers to take time to reflect each day about Whiteness and where it shows up in our unconscious and conscious beliefs, thoughts and actions. This can begin with learning about one's own identity and gathering in like-minded groups.

Bringing together people of color and White people to talk about race can be like riding a bike without training wheels for the first time. People of color experience race far differently than White people, and oftentimes the conversation must be slowed down so White people can begin to comprehend the way their Whiteness makes their lives and perceptions so different from those of their peers of color. Moreover, Michael and Conger state, "White people benefit from a space where we can practice talking about

race in which we can ask honest questions and process our deep emotions around race, while also challenging ourselves to do better, to examine our privilege more critically" (p. 58). Whites cannot expect people of color to assume the role of the teacher all of the time, which is why Whites must do this work on their own. Such work can be done in a space called an affinity group. It can provide a space for White people to practice being productive allies of anti-racism so that in multiracial conversations they do not consistently require attention. Affinity groups can also provide a space for White people to work through guilt, shame, or questions that come up when doing anti-racism work.

Sometimes, White people on the journey of White identity development might experience guilt and claim to not want to identify as White because of the shame they may feel related racism. Beverly Tatum says that "we must be able to embrace who we are in terms of our racial and cultural heritage, not in terms of assumed superiority or inferiority, but as an integral part of our daily experience in which we can take pride" (Tatum, 1997, p. 107). Unfortunately for many White people who understand that racism happens daily, their identity may acknowledge shame instead of pride and keep them from working to end racism.

Educators can find naturally occurring affinity groups at school including through an equity team, at trainings, or simply through discussions where like-minded adults come together. When White people have conversations in multi-racial groups, it can be daunting for people of color to participate in breaking down their feelings because they have to do it every day (Tatum, 1997). White people need White anti-racist allies to provide honest feedback so they can continue to develop their racial identity without depending on people of color.

Being able to reflect about one's own identity is a key first step to becoming a White teacher who is an ally. "When were you first aware of race"? is an important question to reflect upon Michael and Conger (2009) suggest paths that White allies can follow when thinking about White identities, including "the overtly racist White person, the guilty White person, the colorblind White person, and the White anti-racist ally" (p. 59). Moreover, Helm's White Racial Identity Development model suggests further stages for White people to adopt an anti-racist lens. These stages include "professing to being colorblind, disintegration, reintegration, pseudo-independence, immersion, and autonomy" (Singleton, 2013, p. 54). Helm's theory can be considered controversial in education because often, White identity is a new concept to many Whites. Educators can use Helm's theory to think about race and how their habits, thoughts and beliefs can affect others' academic learning. It is crucial that White educators see education as a system with the power to challenge or perpetuate racial injustice.

White communities do not often bring up or talk about race including in their school communities. History textbooks might mention anti-slavery or the Civil Rights movement, but notable White anti-racism allies working towards change are often entirely absent. Such allies included, James Reeb, Michael Schwerner, Peggy McIntosh, Marilyn Buck, Jessie Daniel Ames, and Margo Adair to name a few. "To deny the importance of race in our curricula content is to deny reality" (Rector-Arranda, 2016, p. 5). Educational curriculum must reflect all of the student body. In addition to studying the White dominance, White students and educators need to know about White allies who are further along in their identity development. These allies can guide and support them in their journey.

Capstone Significance. It is important for White teachers to explore their racial identity so that they can be aware of their unconscious and implicit biases. Inner-exploration is important when doing racial equity work otherwise the same norms and beliefs are perpetuated.

If White teachers don't first recognize and address their beliefs, their sense of superiority will prevent them from being an ally in anti-racism and inclusive education. As described above in the definition of CWS, "much of our training as White people has taught us to see racism and racial hierarchies as normal, thus making it the single greatest challenge as allies" (Michael & Conger, 2009, p. 59). White people need to approach their ally relationships with humility. There should be continual learning and growing, and, in this case, White people must be open to honest feedback and constructive criticism so that their privilege does not perpetuate racial injustice. Becoming aware that we have these privileges enables educators to understand that colorblindness is obstructing their view. It is essential that White teachers become aware of ways they may unconsciously choose White norms in their classroom in order to change them. Colorblind beliefs stem from the idea that one does not see differences in skin color (Modica, 2015).

White people need to take a step back to recognize and reflect on their racial identity so they are more likely not to have a colorblind lens. It is critical for teachers to examine their own behaviors and the unconscious biases we have towards our students of color (Scruggs, 2009).

Colorblind Ideology

Background. Since colonization, people of color have been subjected to brutal violence with long-term consequences. Psychologists Na'im Akbar and Wade Nobles argue "post-traumatic slave syndrome psychologically and physiologically affects those of African decent, as well as the re-traumatization of American Indians and Latinos due to the dispossession of land and language" (Singleton, 2013, 98). "Colorblindness negates the cultural values, norms, expectations and life experiences of people of color" (Olsson, 1997, 2). Research collected in the 1980's and 1990's suggested that if you draw attention to racial issues it would lead to stereotyping or discrimination. Minimizing race is a form of colorblindness. When White people pose questions like "when are *they* going to get over it?" or "*everyone* is the same in my classroom" colorblindness is reinforced. If White people were color-conscious then racial equity work could move forward more quickly (Singleton, 2013).

Current Relevance. Is colorblindness a new type of racism? Modica considers "colorblind ideology to be a powerful tool because it allows Whites to ignore present inequities while maintaining their status of privilege" (Modica, 2015). Moreover, she states that many Americans interpret such strides towards equality, like the Brown vs. Board of Education decision or electing a Black president, as indications that American society has grown past the issue of race (Modica, 2015). Colorblindness can also infiltrate systemic racial situations outside of the classroom. An unintentional consequence of colorblindness is the tendency to obscure the institutional nature of racism and the impact it has (Segall and Garrett, 2015). Since we are all alike, according to those who claim colorblindness, the inequities between people of color and whites are

not recognized. For example, Whites may justify segregation in schools as a matter of choice because parents or guardians can decide which school their child will attend—which is not entirely true. Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS), changed school zones in 2011, and students went back to attending their neighborhood school. In this large urban school district there are seven public high schools, and 36,370 students in all schools in the district. Students can attend other schools outside their school zone but must provide their own transportation. (Minneapolis Public Schools, p. 3) This had the effect of creating instant inequities because students may not want to attend their neighborhood school due to lack of resources; however, they may have trouble finding transportation to preferred schools farther away.

Student data from 2015 and teacher data from 2013 show that there are gaps between racial demographics at Henry High School in North Minneapolis and Washburn High School in South Minneapolis. At Henry High School 1,108 students attended school. Of these students attending 1.6% are Native American, 47.7% African American, 33.8 % Asian American, 8.7 % Latino, and 8.1 % White. In comparison 1,563 students attended Washburn High School has 1.6% Native American, 23.1% African American, 4.4 Asian American, 20.4% Latino, and 50.5% White students (Minnepolis Public Schools, 2015). Unlike student data there is not a large difference between teacher data. 87% of teachers at Henry High School and 90% of teachers at Washburn identify at White. This data shows that there are large racial gaps between students and teachers (Minnesota Public School Data, n.d.).

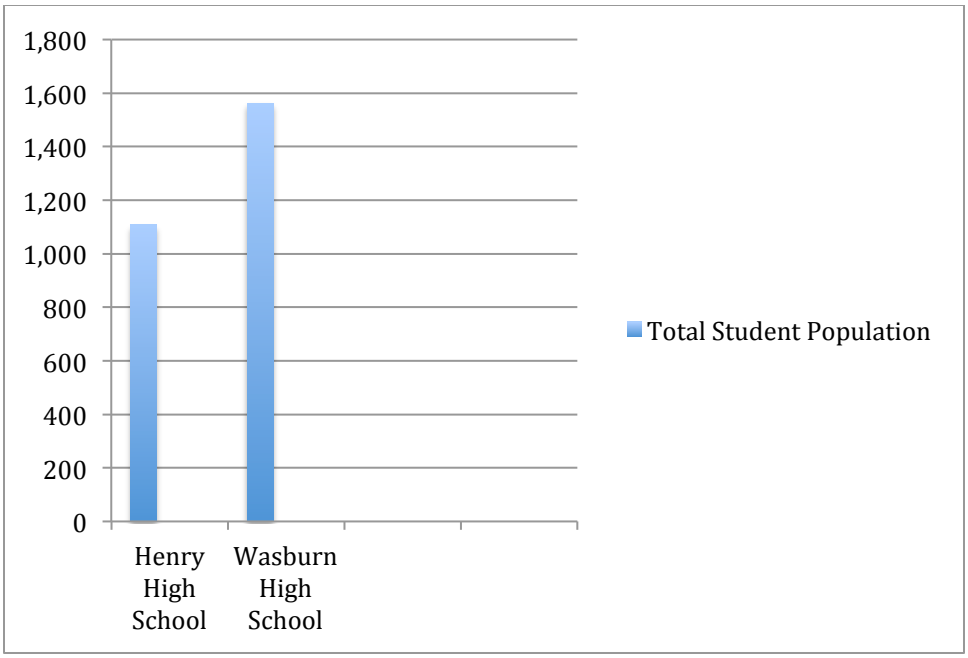

Figure One: Total Student Population

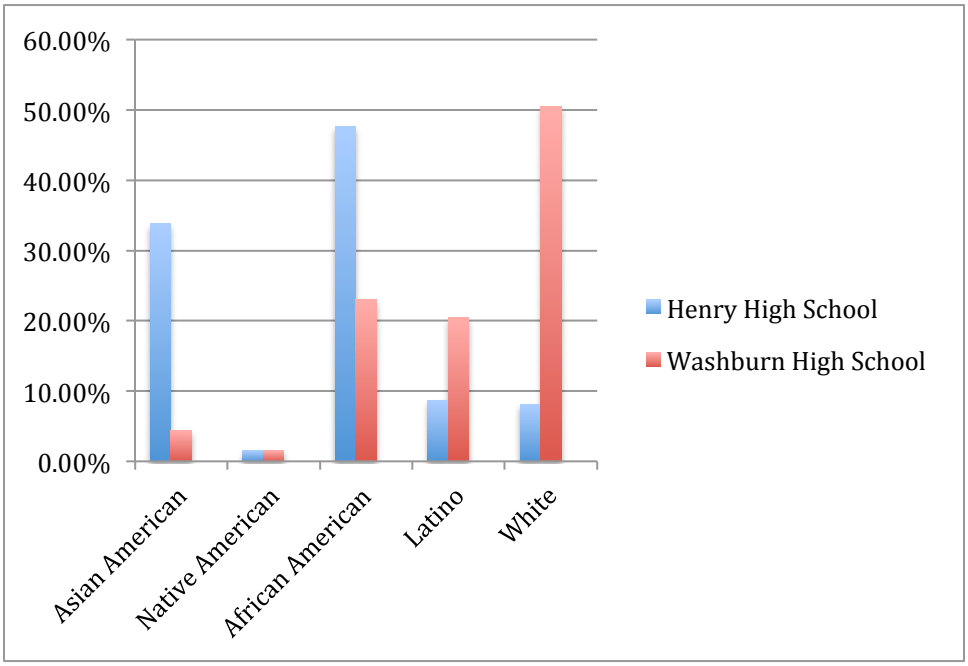

Figure Two: Student Population by Identified Race

The psychological and academic effects of colorblindness on children of color are extensive and costly. When racial blind spots are denied and overlooked system racism is perpetuated. Well-intentioned White people who ignore race do not help to end racism.

The likelihood that racism will occur in schools and society increases if it is not addressed (Modica, 2015). Evidence shows that when students of color are compared to their "high-ability" peers, they are called on less often in class, given less time to respond, praised less frequently, referred and suspended more frequently for infractions, and segregated by grouping (Teaching Tolerance, 2009). Racial justice activists argue that the school-to-prison pipeline is a real phenomenon that starts in schools through colorblindness. The United States Department of Education released a study of public schools revealing that Black children face discrimination even in preschool. In 2011-2012, 42% of Black preschoolers were suspended once, and 48% were suspended more than one time (Kolhatkar, 2014, p.1). These national data are disturbing. Why are 4- and 5-year-old children being suspended? Zero-tolerance policies and the presence of school resource officers are becoming more common and may be contributing to this increase. In 2015, the MPS district reaffirmed its policy to end suspensions for PreK-1 (Tedmon, 2015). This is one step towards more equitable practices, but what about students in 2nd-12th grade?

Colorblindness also shows up in curriculum, through which well-intentioned teachers can have lasting effects on our youth, including reinforcing, and thereby perpetuating racial stereotypes in our society. Teachers need skills to understand that their biases may be affecting students of color through the curriculum choices that they make in their classroom. White supremacy is easily disguised in curriculum, and "to deny the importance of race in our curricular content is to deny reality" (Rector-Arranda, 2016, p.5). A single, hegemonic, White narrative is often presented in textbooks. There may be the occasional class discussions about slavery, the Mexican-American war, or the Civil

Rights Movement, but critical, in-depth stories are rarely heard. For example, the lynching's in Mankato and Duluth, Minnesota, or the story of the Lee family, the first family to move to South Minneapolis after World War II and who are persecuted by neighbors, are often left untold. "Teachers often convey race in ways that are counterproductive under a blind devotion to neutrality, or colorblind approaches can be hostile toward accurate portrayals" (Recotor-Arranda, 2016, p.5) Teachers may feel uncomfortable about expanding their curriculum from the traditional stories that have been written from a singular perspective, or they may lack the skills and experience to do so.

Some educators have asked, "When is it too early to talk to students about race?" Researchers have found that "children as young as three and four already differentiate racial categories. They are not, as we may want to believe, colorblind" (Gorski and Swallwell, 2015, p. 38). Who are teachers trying to protect when they think students are too young to talk about race? What is the real motivation behind this behavior? "Teachers' silence about race denies students the skills they need to talk openly and honestly and the opportunity to think about how racism affects them and their relationships with others. Teachers who believe it is best to be colorblind lose the opportunity to address racial inequality in their classroom, which thereby increases the likelihood that racism will occur in our schools and other systems" (Modica, 2015, p.397). The historical failure to recognize how racial injustices continue to inflict trauma are still manifest in today's classroom. Some students of color feel like they have to assimilate into White norms. Some students have told me that their peers ridiculed them because they "act White," speak in Standard English, or because they are academically

focused. White educators might be able to mitigate the pressure that students of color feel if they are able to understand this dynamic and can build and inclusive classroom to counter it.

When White teachers deny "seeing color," they are also saying they do not see their own color as part of their identity. "This denies a person of color's experience of racism and a White person's experience of privilege" (Osson, 1997, 2). If someone with "light" skin has privileges accorded to them and *chooses* not to recognize differences, their Whiteness is filtered through their "blind" lens. For example, White people may avoid direct language to describe their racial views, be reluctant to share knowledge to avoid discussion about race, or become uncomfortable when discussing racial topics (Bonilla-Silva, 2015). Phrases like "Some of my friends are Black and Latino" or "I used to date someone of color" may be efforts to relate to someone of color. However, declaring these particular relationships is not the equivalent of experiencing or even understanding racial struggles or racism. Rather than avoid "blind" and uncomfortable discussion about race, White people need to embrace the practice of stating what they truly mean in order to shed Whiteness as a social crutch. Since the majority of educators who teach students of color are White, it is important that they take the time to practice how to *see* race by reflecting on their personal beliefs.

Capstone Significance In order for a White teacher to talk about race, they must learn how to acknowledge that color and differences do exist. It is critical that White teachers examine their behaviors and unconscious biases towards students of color (www.tolerance.org, 2009). Reassessing neutrality as equal to equity and the notion of privilege in the context of the education environment are important starting points to

challenging the adverse effects of colorblindness.

Once teachers are able to notice differences then they can practice using equitable practices at the core of their work.

Equity Literacy

Background. As the Civil Rights movement gained momentum during the 1960s and 1970s, students of color demanded inclusive multicultural curriculum in higher education due pressure from political groups like the Brown Berets, Black Panther Party, and Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). SNCC developed over 40 Freedom schools to counter the poor education that sharecroppers received in Mississippi. Schools were designed to reflect the makeup of that particular community. Students received a six-week in-depth education in the summertime, an education that these that students wouldn't normally learn in their traditional school. Students studied academic enrichment, family involvement, civic and social action involvement, intergenerational leadership, nutrition, and health (Williamson, 2013). Since the 1980's, higher education programs have been slow to address racial issues unless prompted by crisis situations. Many universities and colleges began to encourage students to attend one-time workshops or take a diversity course like "Beyond Diversity" to promote tolerance (Kailin, 1999). However, many degree programs in colleges do not require a serious study of race as a way to prepare teachers. Equity literacy is a new concept developed by Paul Gorski. Equity literacy provides a framework that supports both multicultural curriculum development that is equitable in classrooms and schools, and teachers must put equity at the center of what they do. To be able to have equity literacy, teachers must be able to see and understand equity and inequity and justice and injustice.

Current Relevance. According to Ladson-Billings (2006), the problem with teacher preparation is the lack of anthropology in education. She suggests that educators need to study the history and cultural practices of people in the communities and the students they teach who live in those communities. Teacher education programs have course work for pre-service teachers that typically focus on child development, instructional planning, the history and philosophies of education, and how to incorporate literacy and technology into a classroom curriculum. Race is often dismissed or marginalized (Kailin, 1999). Teacher preparatory programs may require a diversity course, but often the course only skims the surface about race and may not provide space for White teachers to reflect about their privilege and White identity. Ladson-Billings (2006) notes that in these diversity courses professors may talk about the broad context of culture but not name race. "Culture is randomly and regularly used to explain everything. At the same time teacher education students learn nothing in depth about culture, rather they use students' culture as a primary explanation to ascribe school failure. Then they address this supposed failure with regimental behavior management and discipline" (p.2). It is not the fault of White students that they do not understand their Whiteness; it is more a reflection of the gap in their training. (Ladson-Billings, 2). Pre-service educators need to be challenged to address this gap. Education programs have the chance to discuss and unpack historical developments, theories, and ideologies about race with their White students. This could be a *teachable moment* for education programs as well as a chance to stimulate systemic change at the college level and in future teacher classrooms.

Pre-service and practicing White teachers need to understand that there are many different ideologies around race. Equity literacy provides a framework that supports both

multicultural curriculum development and the understanding of inequities. Teachers must put equity at the center of what they do.

Equity literacy challenges the idea of grit. Grit ideology derives from the bootstrap perspective that if you just work harder, then you will achieve your goal. Similarly, this ideology posits that you will achieve goals if you are just resilient enough to face these barriers instead of eliminating the barriers. Grit asks students to surmount them even if they are insurmountable. Structural ideology requires educators to have the will and skill to examine and fully understand the complexity of inequity by making systematic changes around access to opportunities. According to Gorski, (2016) Grit and structural ideologies should be included in required education courses for all teachers. Knowledge of these kinds of ideologies is one step to becoming more conscious about social and racial issues as White teachers begin to shift their thinking.

Gorski and Swallwell emphasize that White teachers can learn to *see* race by understanding equity literacy. Equity literacy can occur when school districts, schools, and educators embrace multicultural curricula and shift to a framework that creates more equitable classrooms and schools. (Gorski & Swallwell, 2015). "Equity literacy is important in every subject area. When we teach with and for equity literacy, we're not abandoning content. Rather, we're teaching with an equity lens" (Gorski & Swallwell, 2015, p.3). To achieve transformative change, Gorski suggests developing four equity literacy skills including *"recognizing* subtle forms of bias, discrimination, and inequities, *responding* to bias, discrimination, and inequities in a thoughtful way, *redress* bias, discrimination, and inequities by studying the ways in which bigger social change happens, and *cultivate and sustain* bias-free and discrimination-free communities"

(Gorski & Swallwell, 2015, p. 37). This framework and skills could be used not only at the college level to understand race, but also at the district level in professional development trainings for educators and through programs that mentor teachers.

Evidence shows that teachers want to continue to learn and are willing to take on professional development opportunities. Most teachers welcome the chance for new ideas, suggestions, and feedback to improve their instruction and classroom environment. Cooper states that for professional development to be effective it must directly relate to the teacher. It also must be ongoing, not a one-time session (n.d.). "In order for teachers to retain and apply new strategies, skills, and concepts, they must receive coaching while applying what they are learning (Cooper, n.d., p.3). If new White teachers aren't receiving support through professional development or their administration, then programs like the Peer Assisted Review (PAR) program that mentors new teachers could imbed racial equity exercises or discussions into their daily work with teachers.

Darling-Hammond has noted that, "30% of new teachers leave the profession within 5 years and even more quickly in urban areas" (2010, p. 218). Moreover, educators would be better prepared if cooperating teaching models included a yearlong residency with an expert teacher (Darling-Hammond, 2010). What if the expert teacher had a racial equity lens? Would they be even better prepared to teach in racially diverse schools? Teacher residency models must change. Student teaching for six to eight weeks in a school is not enough to hone skills and translate knowledge in the real-time classroom. Chicago, Boston, Denver, and Minneapolis Public Schools have developed urban teacher residency programs that support pre-service teachers by placing them with an experienced teacher for one year where they co-teach, and they receive a stipend

(Darling-Hammond, 2010). This approach allows teachers to gain a solid understanding of how to teach so they are prepared for their first year in an urban classroom. In addition to a year- round student teaching residency, teachers can benefit form a PAR mentor. Studies show that teachers stay longer in the teaching profession because of the mentoring they receive (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

Lastly, White teachers need to practice writing and teaching equitable curricula. Well-intentioned White teachers who want to celebrate diversity through multicultural curriculum miss the mark when they mask rather than face equity concerns. Developing equitable curriculum can be a chance for teachers to reflect on their Whiteness rather than continue to perpetuate their biases. An individual who is willing to be open and vulnerable without becoming defensive has the potential to make these changes. Equity and social justice should be at the center of the curriculum when teachers write and plan their lessons and units (Gorski & Swallwell, 2015). In addition images, rules, seating arrangements, and daily routines need to be thought through using an equity lens (Singleton, 2013). For example, a circular seating arrangement allows for the community be open and inviting. Images, quotes, and artwork present throughout the room that are made by the students or reflect the students' real-life community provide students a chance to see themselves in a broader context.

Ideally, school districts would implement and practice social justice and equity as the core of all policies. Yet teachers must decide what they can control in their sphere of influence. This can be a chance for teachers to have conversations about race and about ways they can transform what and how they teach. Often though, it is the fear of being labeled a racist that creates a barrier to such conversations. Students are watching and

listening to what is being taught verbally and non-verbally in the classroom and they want these conversations to happen. Educators who believe and practice racial equity can change their classroom environment by bridging what is familiar to students in their personal and home environment to the subject in the classroom. Deep conversations of all kinds can take place.

Capstone Significance. Once teachers center their work around equity, and understand and see the differences between equities and inequities then they can help to make changes within their sphere of influence.

Rationale

My literature review has highlighted what I wish I would have known and learned years ago about myself as a White woman (and teacher) for my personal and professional life. Critical Race Theory is a good place to begin learning about racial consciousness, with its all-encompassing concept of race. This important theory made me aware of the historical implications that affected the background of race in our society. CRT has allowed me to ground myself in that history so I know what to build on for the future.

Racial realism is an important theory because if we don't understand how race is "constructed" and the privileges that come with being White, then it is difficult to understand and reflect about our own racial identity. Critical White Studies is an affirming idea related to racial realism that provides insight for White people on how they benefit from reflecting on and building their racial identity. CWS has inspired me to use my journal as a racial autobiography, as I am constantly thinking about what and who influence my identity.

As a White woman, I want to be intentional about taking the time to consistently reflect on who I am. Practicing not seeing through a colorblind lens and examining my unconscious and implicit biases are important to be able to see things as they are. For that reason, colorblind ideology was critical to include in this literature review. Finally, placing equity at the center of what I do professionally allows me to view, practice, and improve my teaching in a new way. Now that I have a better understanding of my racial identity and tools to counteract racism, it is my hope to share these frameworks, ideologies, and skills with other White teachers in the future.

Summary

The literature is clear: there is no single theory, approach or process to address racism in educational environments. Instead, this literature review points to a specific collection of core knowledge, skills and experiences needed by White teachers to effectively teach in racially diverse school environments. Essential concepts and approaches which emerge from the literature are 1) that racism continues to be a normal presence in our society; 2) that White teachers must examine their unconscious and conscious biases, beliefs, behaviors and thoughts through reflection; 3) that White teachers need to practice having conversations about race, and 4) that White teachers must create inclusive curriculum which has relevance to their students' lived environment.

Research pointed to several theories that have the potential to be used to improve a White teacher's racial consciousness, a key factor in their skill development. During the course of my review, I discovered recommendations for higher education and professional development programs to implement racial equity into teachers'

conversations, curriculum, and daily work in order to prepare them to teach with a racial equity lens. The literature also points out the need for them to reflect about race, personal identity, biases and privileges. Over time teachers' experiences, knowledge, and skill sets will grow, enabling them to develop into racial equity allies. Having this type of structural framework provides a pathway that will help teachers make transformative changes in educational racial equity.

In Chapter Three, I will use the five theories and ideologies identified in my literature review to guide development of the qualitative and quantitative research methodology for this capstone. I will describe the instructional setting, the participants recruited, and the survey and interview instruments administered to identify what skills, knowledge, and experiences White teachers perceive as having prepared them to teach racially diverse students.

CHAPTER THREE

Methods

Introduction

The purpose of this pilot study was to explore the knowledge, experiences, and skills that White teachers perceive they need to be more effective, inclusive, and racially aware. The action research question I examined was *What core knowledge, essential skills and experiences do White teachers believe have effectively prepared them to teach racially diverse students?* I chose to use a mixed-methods research approach to gain an understanding of the study participants' experiences, knowledge and skills with regard to their racial consciousness. The first section of this chapter describes the relevance and rationale for the action research, which is a systematic investigation that gathers information about a specific topic (Mills, 2014). The second section of this chapter presents the research design and methods. The final section summarizes Chapter Three and provides an introduction to Chapter Four. The collected research data are intended to be valuable to White teachers, principals, instructional coaches, equity departments, Peer Assisted Review (PAR) and Professional Development (PD) programs, as well as undergraduate and graduate degree programs in education.

Rationale and Relevance of the Research Plan

The literature reviewed in Chapter Two showed the continuing existence of racism in our society and therefore the great need for White teachers to continue building

their racial consciousness in order to be effective in their racially diverse classrooms. “It is crucial that White educators recognize how the things that happen in schools affect the outcomes and practices of other public institutions and the larger society, but first they must demonstrate and accept that racism is still real, common and endemic in education” (Rector-Arranda, 2016, p. 3). The teaching workforce remains mostly White in school districts like the one where this pilot study was conducted. There is a disparity between the number of White teachers and the number of students of color. It is unknown what skills, knowledge, and experiences White teachers have to teach in their racially diverse schools. In addition, it is unclear what educational approaches and experiences at either the higher education level or professional development level affect teacher preparedness. By collecting data directly from White teachers in racially diverse school environments, the findings of this study can help higher education programs and PAR and PD programs at the district level make changes to improve teacher preparedness for working effectively in those environments.

Research Setting

This pilot study took place in a school district of a large, urban, upper Mid-western city. There are three major metro area school districts in this region with the Mississippi river dividing two major cities and school districts. In 2015, 35,717 students were enrolled and 23,689 (66.32%) were students of color. This is an ideal region to explore these issues since the majority of students are of color and White teachers make up the majority. As a result, there is a significant racial disparity between these two groups.

Research Participants

Eligible participants for this study comprised two groups. Cohort I was comprised of licensed secondary White teachers with five or more years of classroom teaching experience. Cohort II was comprised of licensed White teachers who were new to the field of education. The White teachers were selected at random by this investigator from a roster provided by lists of teachers names posted on the selected high school websites. This was to ensure that bias was not introduced in the selection process. In addition, pseudo names were used to ensure confidentiality in this study.

For Cohort I, ten White teachers with five or more years of classroom teaching experience with a range in content areas taught were selected for a first group of participants. Of the ten participants seven identified as female and three identified as male. Teaching licenses included Spanish (2), social studies (2), health and physical education (1), theater(1), literacy(1), music (1), mass media (1), and visual art (1). By selecting and interviewing more advanced teachers, I anticipated that they would have different or more experiences because they had more time to teach in the district.

For Cohort II, four first-year secondary teachers were chosen to gain an understanding of the effect on their professional practice of racial equity discussions, curricula, and other experiences they may have been exposed to in their academic education programs. Of the four participants in Cohort II, two participants identified as male and two identified as female. These four participants are licensed in Math, English, English as a Second Language, and History. By selecting and interviewing beginning teachers, I anticipated that the information they provided would reflect current training programs. I created a list of eligible participants from the school websites and had them

randomized. Teachers who agreed to participate signed a letter of consent. (See Appendices C and D).

Research Methods

Qualitative research has been described as using "narrative and descriptive approaches to examine the research question and problem through the perspective of the participants." In addition quantitative data is described as a collection of numerical data that is analyzed and tests the hypothesis in a controlled manner (Mills, 2014) .The pilot study used a mixed methods approach. Two data collection methods were used: pre-interview surveys and one-on-one interviews. First, surveys were sent via e-mail to gather information on the demographics of the participants and on their academic training related to the theories and practices presented in Chapter Two. These surveys helped to describe both the personal and professional background of the participants, documenting their experiences, skills, and knowledge in relation to racial consciousness (see appendix A for survey questions).

Following the survey, one-on-one interviews occurred, based on questions that were sent out ahead of time. The interviews that are a key part of the pilot study were conducted on-site at the school where the participant worked, or in a quiet public space like a public library or coffee shop that is conducive for the needs of the participant. Using a semi-structured interview protocol, I explored in-depth with participants the skills, knowledge, and academic experiences that they felt helped to prepare them for their work in their racially diverse school. All participants received identical questions, which this investigator administered verbally. Their responses were recorded verbatim and subsequently transcribed. These interviews are contained in the appendix (see

appendix B). In addition, interview questions took into account personal experiences around racial equity that may have contributed to their feeling well prepared (see appendix B for the interview questions).

Time Frame of the Pilot Study

The entire pilot study was conducted between July 2016 and January 2017. The survey phase took one week for each participant group to complete. The interviews for Group II White teachers with five or more years of experience were conducted between July-September of 2016. The interviews for Group I White teachers who just graduated from a higher education program were conducted between the middle of October 2016 and January 2017.

Data Analysis

The survey results were tabulated by organizing the qualitative responses into a spreadsheet, and the quantitative responses will be added numerically. My qualitative data analysis revealed patterns within the interview and journal responses that I recorded and present in Chapter Four. I compared the tenured teachers' perceptions of their experiences, skills, and knowledge to the first-year teachers' responses to understand factors in the development of racial consciousness that can influence teachers over time.

Lastly, I kept a personal observation journal throughout the research process. My own observations, thoughts, and personal experiences also helped me to describe the data. My personal reflections and observations are important because they allow me to capture what I notice and hear in the moment.

Approval to Conduct Research

Approval was granted by the school district to conduct research, after an appeal of their existing policy and a final research proposal were submitted. Hamline approved the collection of data after the requirements of the Human Subject Review were met. All participants were assured that their names and responses would remain anonymous, and participants signed their letter of consent agreeing to participate by completing a survey, interview, and three journal entries.

Summary

Racial awareness has not been well addressed in the education field. The literature provides indicators of the knowledge, skills, and experiences that contribute to teacher preparation for work in racially diverse school environments. This action research study used a mixed-methods approach through surveys, interviews, and journals with two groups of participants. The data collected represent the perspectives of White teachers relative to their professional preparation and help indicate what needs to be changed to make that preparation more relevant to current and future educators.

CHAPTER FOUR

Data Collection and Analysis

Overview

Data were collected from surveys and interviews with two cohorts, each composed of a convenience sample of White teachers from two inner-city secondary schools. Cohort 1 consisted of ten teachers who have been teaching five years or more, and Cohort 2 was made up of four teachers with less than one year of experience. Two data collection methods were used: 1) a survey that participants completed online, followed by 2) an in-person interview using open-ended questions. Data from both instruments were examined to better understand *what core knowledge, essential skills, and experiences do White teachers believe have effectively prepared them to teach racially diverse students?*

The survey asked participants to self-rate their awareness of the concepts and theories discussed in Chapter 2: Critical Race Theory (CRT), Racial Realism (RR), Critical White Studies (CWS), Colorblindness (CB), and Equity Literacy (EL). The survey also collected data about their professional and academic training and the educational context in which the concepts were learned. To avoid bias, I did not provide background information about the survey questions, concepts, or theories.

In-person interviews were conducted with each teacher. I recorded each interview, transcribed them, and coded the responses based on their relevance to Critical Race

Theory, Racial Realism, Critical White Studies, Colorblindness, and Equity Literacy. I took observation notes during and after each interview in order to capture key thoughts and ideas for later review and reference. Interviews were coded using a color-coded key. The responses were matched with a specific color to the theories and concepts. In-person interviews allowed the participants to also reflect on their own racial identity, the meaning of racism in the context of the classroom and educational system, what has prepared them to teach in racially diverse schools, and what they believe could have better prepared them. Names have been changed to assure confidentiality. The complete list of interview questions and survey questions can be found in appendix A.

Survey Results for Experienced Teachers (Cohort 1)

Cohort 1 included ten White teachers with five years or more of teaching experience. One teacher held a bachelor's degree; eight held both bachelor's and master's degrees; and one held bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees. Teaching licenses included Spanish (2), social studies (2), health and physical education (1), theater(1), literacy(1), music (1), mass media (1), and visual art (1). Participants were asked if they were familiar with the following concepts or theories: CRT, Racial Realism, CWS, Colorblindness, and Equity Literacy. Tables 1 and 2 show participants' awareness of theories relative to their level of education and their years of teaching experience.

Level of Education	Critical Race Theory	Racial Realism	Critical White Studies	Colorblindness	Equity Literacy
BA (1)	X			X	X
MA (8)	XXXX		X	XXXXXXX	XXXXX
PhD (1)	X	X	X	X	X
Total	6	1	2	9	7

Table 1. Cohort 1 Awareness of Theories by Education

Years of experience	Critical Race Theory	Racial Realism	Critical White Studies	Colorblindness	Equity Literacy
5				X	X
6	X			X	
8	X			XX	X
9	X			X	X
12	X			X	X
13	X		X	X	
15					
16				X	X
22	X	X	X	X	X

Table 2: Cohort 1 Awareness of Theories by Teaching Experience

As shown in Figure 1, at least 60% of participants reported awareness of three of the five concepts and theories: CRT (60%), Colorblindness (90%) and Equity Literacy (70%).

Two participants (20%) were aware of Critical White Studies (CWS) and one participant was aware of Racial Realism (10%) (Figure 1).

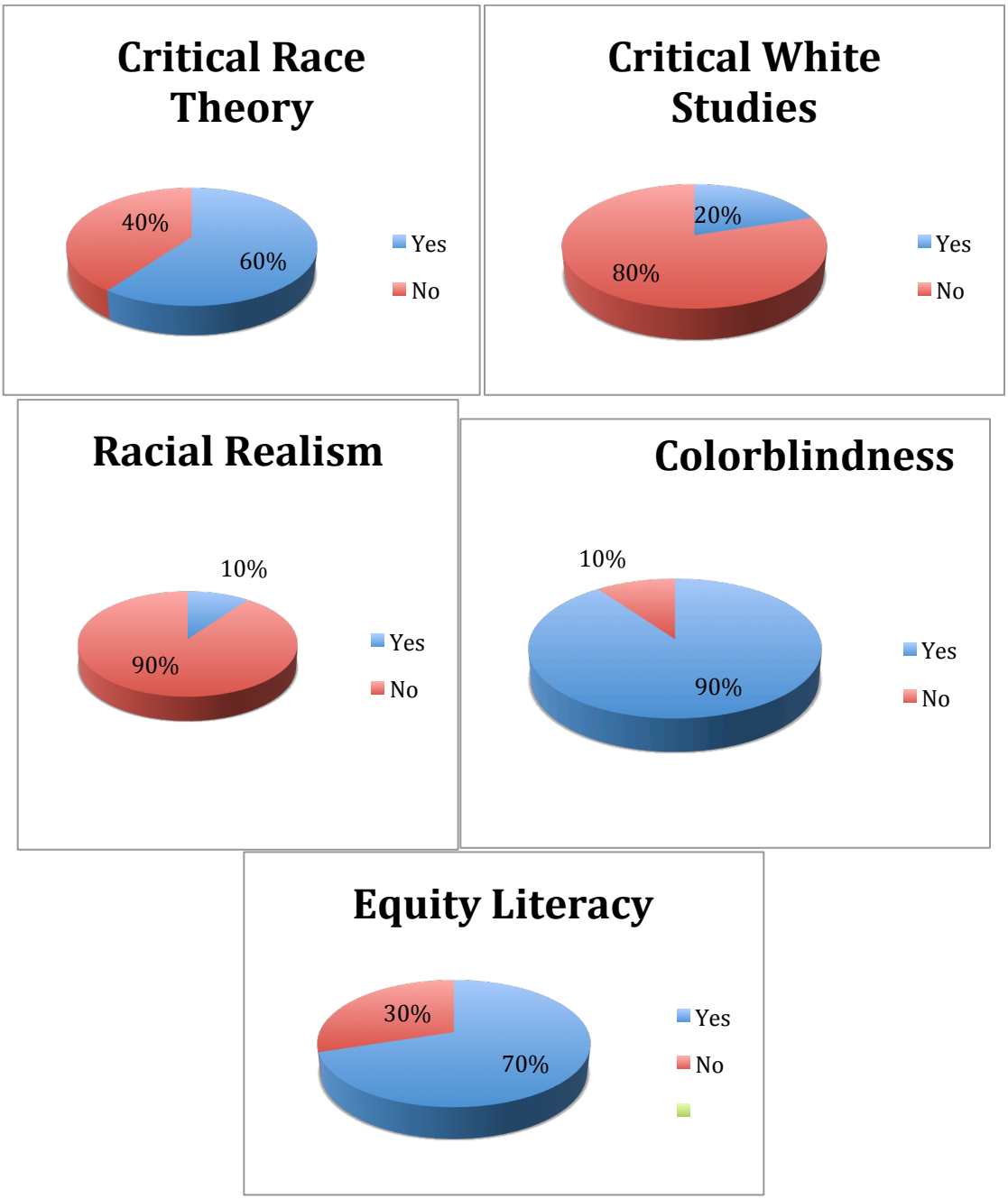

Figure 1: Awareness of Theories by Cohort 1

The survey included open-ended questions to ask participants how they had learned about the concepts and theories. Table 3 displays the sources of participants' knowledge.

Concepts & Theories (# of participants)	Friends/Colleagues	Higher Education	Professional Development
CRT (6)	XX	XX	XXX
RR (1)		X	
CWS (2)	X	XX	
CB (9)	XXXX	XXX	X
EL (7)		XXX	XXXX

Table 3 Cohort 1: Sources of Information on Concepts and Theories

Three participants (30%) learned about CRT at professional trainings, and two participants (20%) learned about CRT in their undergraduate or graduate studies. Four participants (40%) learned or heard about CB more informally, including through friends, on the Internet, or by personally researching the theories or concepts. Only three (30%) participants stated that they had heard or learned about Colorblindness in their college courses (one in a doctoral program), and one received information on CB in a professional training session. One participant stated that they had heard of CB but did not know where they heard about it and thought they could be wrong about what it means. A notable number of participants also recognized the theory/concept of EL. Four participants (40%) indicated that they had heard or learned about EL through professional

development, and three (30%) reported that they learned about EL through academic lectures.

The number of years of participants' experience did not appear to influence their awareness of of any theories. Only one out of ten teachers could identify those theories and concepts, so there is a need for teachers to learn, grow, and build their awareness around racial equity.

In-Person Interviews with Cohort 1 Teachers

Critical Race Theory. The first interview question asked "What does racism mean to you in the context of our educational system and the classroom?" The majority of teachers interviewed understood what CRT is and gave examples of basic racial inequities in the classroom and systems in education. Some could describe what racism is, the personal and professional effects of race and racism, and the fear they felt in the classroom due to racism. Two of the seven participants, Katie and Kathy, explicitly identified race as a social construction. Katie said, "Racism is a lived reality in people's lives but has no valid biological underpinning… so that it functions in our society in ways that reproduced structures of inequality." Kathy, on the other hand, stated more specifically that, "we as human beings created this concept of race in America." Seven of the ten participants described how the socially constructed concept of racism affected education and education in their classroom. Some of the themes that surfaced were unconscious bias, expectations due to race, segregation, access and opportunities, and curriculum. Jan and Christine said, "Racism is excluding children from opportunities," and "Racism means continuing the legacy of White people having access based on the color of their skin—from opportunities to resources—that people with Black and Brown

skin don't have access to as easily or quickly." Mike addressed the question differently by stating, "Being White is something you always have to be aware of. It's not something you teach." Participants' ability to recognize these inequities is important in ridding racism from the classroom and the school.

Racial Realism. Racial Realism was a concept that was identified by only one participant. However, several teachers reported situations in schools that confirmed a perception that interest convergence and racism was real. Interest convergence refers to the idea that White people will support racial justice when they believe something is in it for them (Brophy,2008.)Kathy and Angie reflected on personal experiences to describe how racism was real to them, with Angie citing a student's concern that had been shared with her: "A couple of students said they were speaking Spanish in another class to try and help somebody with their work that they didn't understand, and their teacher yelled at them for speaking Spanish." Kathy provided another explicit example:

> Growing up in a small northern town in the upper Midwest where it is mostly White was my experience. We had one Black student in my high school. Ever since the lynching in the 1930s, the town is very segregated. There is the Black side of town and the White side of town. The city we currently live in is the same. When I think back to some of the things we did, which I didn't think were right at the time, …at an assembly they actually had a slave auction. You could have a slave for a day. They stood on the auction block. I wonder how that one Black student felt.

Two participants (20%) from Cohort 1 indicated an understanding of Racial Realism. Part of the RR concept that was not discussed by participants in the interviews

was interest convergence. Participants indirectly noted that their White or light skin provided privileges for them in their daily lives, but they did not mention taking action for racial injustice. It was not clear whether perceived benefits versus anticipated consequences of taking action were a consideration in their behavior.

Critical White Studies (CWS). Only two teachers (20%) in Cohort 1 reported familiarity with the CWS concept. Katie immediately observed, "If you are White, then you have less additional stresses. That's a reality." She also addressed how she noticed her privilege both as a child and as an adult member of a professional union:

> I definitely had the experience of understanding privilege—having my own White and class privilege from the union. Growing up in a suburban environment, there was no real concern for safety, and kids were able to run free through people's yards. No sense of being monitored by the police. The only time I had some minor traffic violation was going through a red light, and I was terrified. I knew I was privileged, and I was going to get off just fine.

The theme of privilege became a pattern in the interviews, as described by another participant:

> Being arrested caused me to reflect about my racial identity. That was a big learning experience in terms of understanding White privilege. In the moment, I wasn't shot like a lot of Black men are. I wasn't brutalized like women are by police, but, in that moment, Whiteness didn't protect me from the law like a lot of White people experience.

Only one participant discussed his fear as a White male: “Race is scary. It was one of my hesitations to talk with you. I feel like I’m always on guard on what I say and how I say it.” He went on to describe that “I live in an all-White community. It sounds terrible. What you’re doing is great, but it drives me crazy because there isn’t enough training on the planet to have me recognize [what it is] to feel like you’re different.”

Whiteness as an identity seemed foreign to Cohort 1, and the interviews reflected unease around that concept. Because open reflection on their racial identity was inhibited, this cohort of White teachers seemed to be stymied in knowing how to increase their awareness of privilege and how to mitigate its impact on teaching a diverse group of students. The interviews of Cohort 1 seemed to raise more questions and a sense of implicit conflict rather than evoking confidence in skills, knowledge, or experience that could guide them toward ways to address racism in the system or in the classroom.

Colorblindness. 90% in Cohort 1 stated that they had heard of Colorblindness. Three expressed uneasiness around recognizing their bias on the one hand and fear of being unconsciously biased on the other, as Angie observed:

> I don’t feel 100% prepared to teach [students of] different ethnic and racial backgrounds. …Especially with what’s going on, I feel more skittish around it because I don’t want to do racial profiling or have targets. So I don’t know if I’m going to treat students different.

Ted had a similar response: “If you’re inexperienced as a teacher, you think about race, and, you’re like, oh my gosh, what if I say something wrong and I sound racist?” Kathy cited an interaction with another colleague who had his defenses up when they talked about curriculum. He told her, “I think having a checklist of different things, like

making sure there is every race, is racism." In their discussion, Kathy was adamant about having representation from all racial backgrounds, and later she noted, "The alternative to his suggestion would be having all White men in curriculum." She added, "I've heard the argument that Colorblindness is offensive. It's not recognizing race, but at the same time you have to go in and out of it." Essentially, Kathy is acknowledging an example of White privilege by choosing what text is read. An example of what Kathy was describing surfaced in Mike's interview. He talked about the historical effects of Colorblindness and how students were taught to not see color in the '80s and '90s. Mike articulated the inherent contradiction of this approach: "We don't see color, yet we see teacher's color. Colorblindness is getting to be detrimental. When it comes to teachers and our color, [it] stands out. It's nailed all of the time." Mike recognized that it was once socially acceptable to not see color. He is a well-intentioned teacher who doesn't want to be called racist, but when the topic of race comes up, he feels guilty and defensive.

40% of Cohort 1 teachers learned about CB informally through their friends or on the internet; however, this concept causes them confusion and uncertainty in how to proceed. Choosing not to see differences as promoted by Colorblindness makes it more difficult to move forward with racial equity work.

Equity Literacy. Each teacher in Cohort 1 had a different narrative of how they put equity at the center of their curriculum. Seven of the ten participants stated that they knew what Equity Literacy was. Katie shared the following explanation:

> Learning a lot in my graduate school experience and on my own about diverse artists and art movements helped. Texts we use in my classroom are not the texts in the classroom when I grew up. I use different examples

> of race, ethnicity, nationality, and sexuality so that way students can maybe find a way in and see themselves more easily.

Angie, a Spanish teacher, had a similar response: “I create a platform for students when I bring in Latino community members.” Ted said that, “ to have Equity Literacy you need to readjust your thinking and create a culture within a classroom and build relationships with students.” Jan described her standard for equity: “I’m not going to ask them to do anything I haven’t done myself so I can be authentic.” She also thought that building relationships was key, stating, “I want my kids of color to feel safe.”

Of the teachers who stated that they understood Equity Literacy, four were able to provide specific ways that they keep equity at the center of their curriculum. They cited the need to have more diverse texts, speakers, and training to be better prepared in maintaining equity in their classroom. However, more participants from Cohort 1 were unsuccessful in addressing equity to finding ways to implement equitable practices in their teaching. For example, Kathy said that she will be teaching race conditions in her classroom but wonders how she will do that.

Ted reflected on his experience as a new teacher and how it influenced his equity efforts: “You’re worried about establishing yourself as an authority figure rather than creating a classroom that puts more equal footing where things can actually be discussed.” Many teachers are focused, first, on how to control the classroom and second, on how to make it equitable.

Although participants may know what equity is and what literacy is, they did not appear to understand Equity Literacy and how to achieve it. Despite the high number of

teachers who said they knew about the Equity Literacy concept, their examples did not convey a true understanding.

Survey Results for New Teachers (Cohort 2)

I intended to interview ten teachers with less than one year of teaching experience. Teachers were identified by Peer Assisted Review (PAR) mentors and requests for participants were sent out; however, only four teachers responded and were surveyed and interviewed. To avoid bias, I did not provide background information about the survey questions, concepts, or theories. All four participants had graduated from a degree program in education in the spring of 2016. Two had bachelor's degrees, and two had master's degrees. One of the teachers with a bachelor's degree is currently enrolled in a graduate program. Teaching licenses included Math, English, English as a Second Language, and History.

One of the teachers with a bachelor's degree identified four of the five theories and concepts as shown in Table 3.

Educational Level	Critical Race Theory	Racial Realism	Critical White Studies	Colorblindness	Equity Literacy
BA	X		XX	X	X
MA				X	
Total	1	0	2	2	1

Table 3: Cohort 2 Awareness of Theories by Education

Cohort 2 teachers were less aware of the five theories and concepts than the Cohort 1 teachers with five years or more experience. As shown in Figure 2, none of the

five concepts and theories was recognized by more than two (50%) of the participants: CRT (25%), Racial Realism (0%), Critical White Studies (50%), Colorblindness (50%) and Equity Literacy (25%).

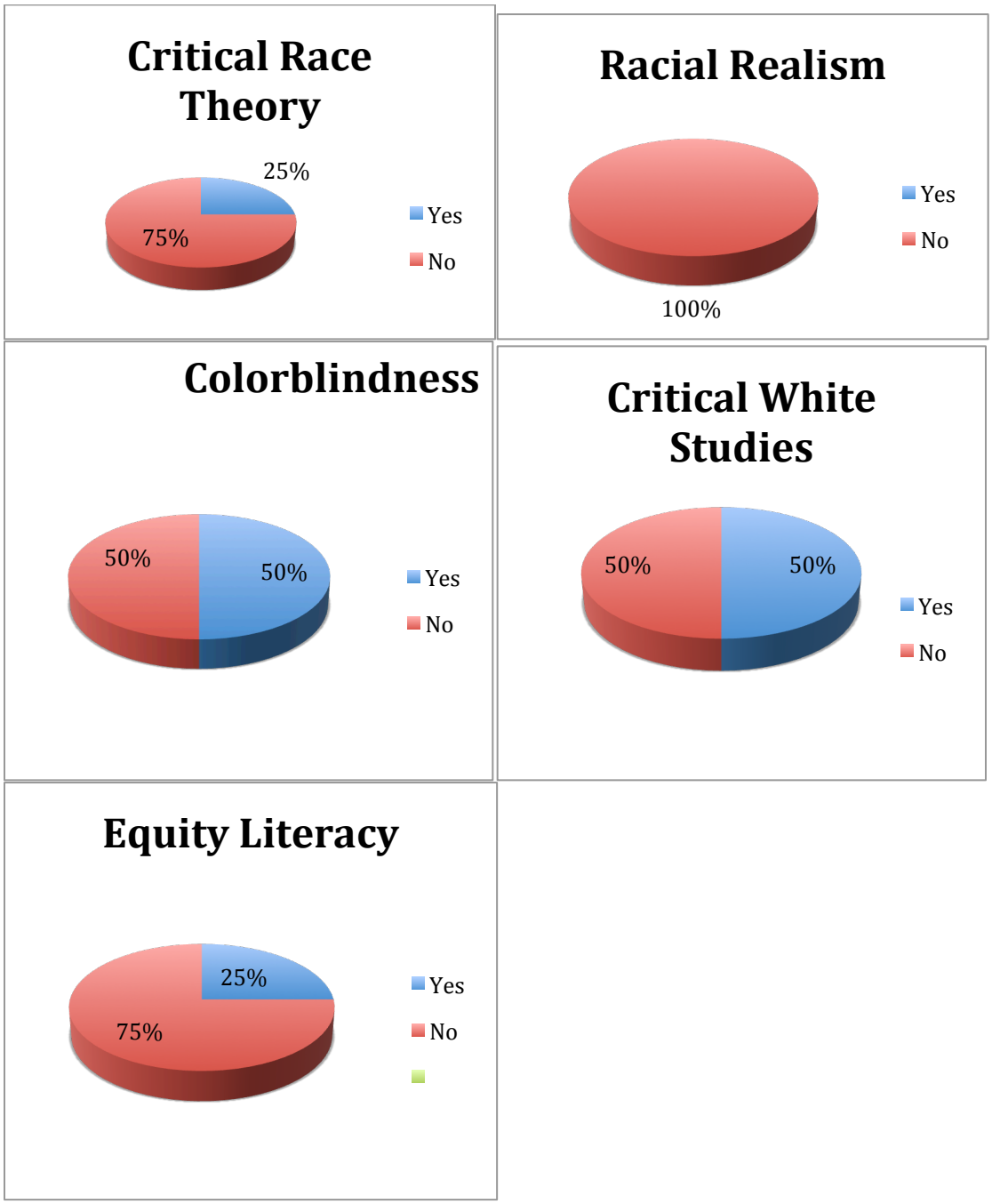

Figure 2: Awareness of theories by Cohort 2

Cohort 2 also answered the open-ended survey questions on how they had heard of or learned about the concepts and theories. Table 4 displays the sources of their information.

Concepts & Theories (# of participants)	Friends/Colleagues	Higher Education	Professional Development
CRT (3)	X	X	X
RR (0)			
CWS (2)	X		X
CB (2)	X	X	
EL (1)	X		

Table 4 Cohort 2: Sources of Information on Concepts and Theories

The survey data from Cohort 2 shows a relatively high exposure to Critical Race Theory (CRT) with 25% learning about CRT in higher education, 25% at professional development trainings, and 25% through friends/colleagues totaling 75%. Critical White Studies (CWS) and Colorblindness had equal percentages (25%) of sources of information. CWS had two participants who learned about the concepts and theories through friends and colleagues, and two participants who learned about Colorblindness through friends and in higher education. There were no participants who learned about Racial Realism and only one participant (25%) who learned about Equity Literacy from their friends or colleagues. As new teachers, Cohort 2 participants learned four of the five theories and concepts through their friends and colleagues. This is higher than any other learning source.

In-Person Interviews with Cohort 2 Teachers

In-person interviews were conducted with the four participants, who were asked the same questions as those in Cohort 1. I also took observation notes during and after each interview in order to capture key thoughts and ideas for later review and reference. The interviews were transcribed and coded based on their relevance to Critical Race Theory, Racial Realism, Critical White Studies, Colorblindness, and Equity Literacy. Interviews were coded using a color-coded key. The responses were matched with a specific color to the theories and concepts.

Critical Race Theory. All participants in Cohort 2 had similar responses to the question, "What does racism mean to you in the context of our educational system and the classroom?" That is, they expressed the idea that racism was connected to systems within our society. Brandon made the general observation that "Our society is racist and the system perpetrates that racism," and Julie expanded on that idea:

> In terms of racism in the context of the educational system, I think of institutionalized racism in the way that sort of is reflected in our practices and the ways that we structure schools. We come from a very historically White perspective.

Ashley was able to give a specific example that related to the school where she teaches:

> I like to think that our school is open, but, in many ways, institutionalized racism is where you don't [expect it]…It's not blatant racism. Racism shows up in tracking, curriculum, suspensions etc… You have to work

> very hard to do the opposite sometimes. So we have it built in our curriculum and the way classes and the schools are structured.

Adam shared another specific example related to Critical Race Theory. "Systemically, you think of racism in terms of curriculum. A lot of teachers aren't aware or concerned about their curriculum in terms of ethnicity or racial pedagogy. They may be teaching books only by White authors or male White authors."

Three out of the four participants knew what CRT was, and all provided examples of racism in the context of the educational system that specifically related to CRT. There appeared to be a high level of appreciation for the key elements of CRT by Cohort 2.

Racial Realism. None of the participants identified this concept as familiar in their survey responses. However, I found elements in their interviews that connect to racial realism, to the idea that systemic racism is real, and to the notion that racial patterns adapt in ways that maintain White dominance. Adam and Julie both identified ways they have been impacted as White teachers. Adam said, "I think that racism is so ingrained in the school system. From preschool on, students are set up to act, think, and do a certain way." Julie went further to personally reflect about the pervasiveness of racism and its reality for teachers:

> You're always kind of hyperaware of it, and you're trying not to screw it up—knowing that you're screwing it up. It's such a complex situation. You can't be perfect, and you can't be right 100% of the time. You're trying to navigate this obstacle course. That's a reflection of the institutionalized racism, and that is just so chaotic and confusing.

Ashley had a similar view on racial realism, but she posed a question about taking action, rather than just reflecting about the realism of race in our society and schools:

> We think very traditionally that school should be a certain way and kids need a certain way. You have to work in those confines to change the system. A lot [of teachers] aren't quite able to grasp how to do that. How can they make change?

Since participants did not identify Racial Realism in the survey, it is not currently taught widely in higher education, or covered in professional development trainings. Nonetheless, participants voiced an awareness of institutionalized racism that benefits Whiteness and dominant ideologies, which is central to this concept.

Critical White Studies. Two of the four participants knew of Critical White Studies as a theory. Julie stated that she learned about CWS primarily through discussions with friends, and Angela stated that she learned about it at a Beyond Diversity training. Both were able to identify examples of how they reflected about their racial identity. Julie described it this way.

> My culture is related to race. I have that power dynamic still. I'm really aware and self-conscious of my actions. I think a lot of times racist attitudes are accidental. The things that are said and done are ways that reflect my power and me. That can sort of marginalize my students who are of a different race than me.

Angela's experience growing up differed from Julie's and affected how she saw herself as a White woman, but she still recognized her White privilege:

> I grew up on the northside. That is different than most White people I know. I think you have a different perspective from a place when you are a minority.

> What world do I fit into, and how do I relate to other people? How do I navigate my life? How do I navigate it with my students? When does my privilege fit in?

The questions that Angela raised were important to her reflection on her identity. She connected her experience of where she grew up to her students. “I feel like it’s harder sometimes to relate with some White people because they don’t necessarily understand that code switching piece that a lot of students do, quite frankly.” Code switching is a term for slipping into another language or accent without knowing it (Thompson, 2013.) The ability to code switch is a strength and is seen as a positive skill. Code switching is also relevant because in CWS themes of how Whites see themselves, Whiteness, White consciousness and culture are some of the themes that are explored in CWS.

The two male participants were not familiar with CWS, but they mentioned experiences in their interview comments that seemed related to the theory. Brandon, who teaches on the northside primarily with students of color, expressed some frustration with his situation:

> I got all of these students who come here, and I’m the White guy in the room, and they’re used to dealing with that racism. To me it means tread lightly. Be careful what you say and how you say it. I’ve had a tough time reflecting on my racial identity.

As a White male teacher on the southside of the city, Adam had a different experience.

> As a White teacher, first-year teacher, male first-year teacher, I’m often in the position trying to navigate that [racism in the classroom]. Because I’m White, it does make it different. It makes me aware of my ethnic and racial identity.

It appears that all Cohort 2 participants have reflected about their racial identity to some degree. Some are more aware than others, and they had started thinking about their racial identity at different points in their lives relative to their personal and professional experiences.

Colorblindness. Two participants indicated an awareness of Colorblindness in their survey. However, few explicit examples came out in the interviews that demonstrated their understanding of the concept, except for one from Julie. She addressed the idea of not seeing racism due to the systems in place in our society:

> I guess it's hard because people in our educational system don't want to see racism. The people I talk to don't want to be racist. Because of the way the systems are set up, we're able to be racist without being intentional about it. That's still racism. It's unintentional racism.

Like Julie, Brandon expressed his view of Colorblindness through the lens of privilege:

> There is this whole racism thing, and it affects my students. Deeply. They're always talking about it. I would hear it all of the time. It got me used to the whole race factor. I never thought about it too much when I'm with my peers.

Brandon seemed able to shut off the topic of race and racism when it was convenient for him. He was able to think about the environment that he grew up in and the beliefs that shaped him, but he did not seem to know what to do with those beliefs and values. It may be that Julie and Brandon do not have the tools, skills or best practices to make personal and professional changes.

Equity Literacy. Only one participant from this cohort could identify what Equity Literacy is on the survey, and that was due to professional development. However, all four participants could give examples in the interviews of how they had seen or demonstrated what it means to have equity at the center of a teacher's practice. For example, Angela uses more than one social studies textbook in her class. Even though she is a new teacher, and faces the challenge of writing and teaching text-based lessons for the first time, she tries to expand her resources beyond the typical social studies textbook: "I don't use just one textbook because I feel like a lot of them are geared toward the dominant race and higher levels. They're geared towards the top kids and not necessarily the kids that are reading low." Julie connected equity with expectations in her class and establishing herself as an authoritative figure in her classroom: "I think of the ways in which my expectations are related to my culture. I think it comes down to how reflective I am hearing from students and being in a different role with them." Adam also expressed that learning about one's own racial and ethnic identity was important in the classroom and provided "an alternative way to teach." The equity-related theme in how these three teachers think appeared to be related to their role in the classroom and how they see themselves in relation to their students, the curriculum and the systems. Angela said it best:

> I think relating and building a relationship is the most important part because, if students that have been living in a system that their parents don't trust, they won't trust it either. I wish I had more training [in] differentiating material. You're trying to be equitable but you don't always have the material to do that right away. It takes time to develop.

A Comparison of Cohort One and Cohort Two

Based on the results of the interviews and surveys, I compared Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 on their awareness of the concepts and theories. Figure 3 presents the percentages of teachers in each cohort who could identify the racial concepts and theories. The results indicate that the majority of both cohorts have heard of CRT and Colorblindness. Cohort 1 demonstrated more knowledge about CRT and Equity Literacy than Cohort 2, and both cohorts demonstrated low or no understanding of Racial Realism.

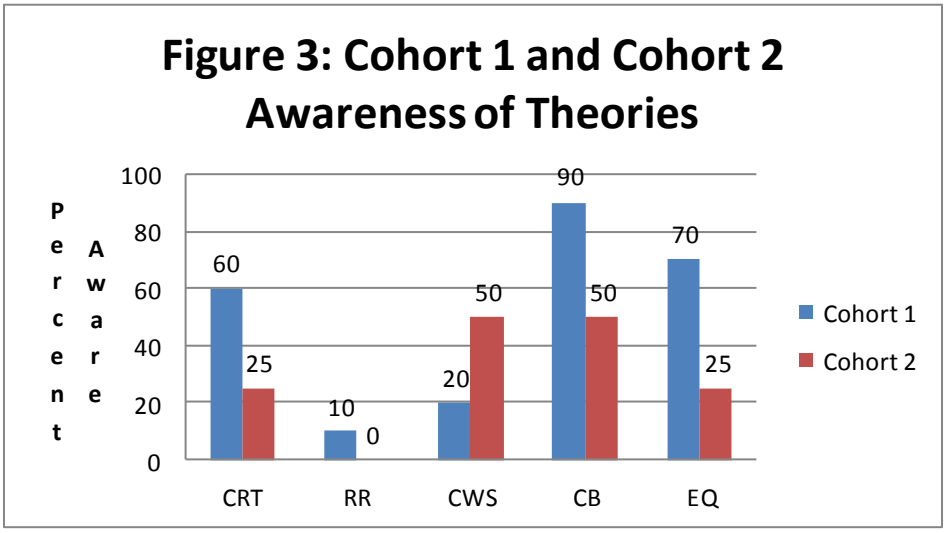

Table 5 presents each cohort's awareness of the concepts and theories at a low, medium or high level. Participants who provided zero to one example of awareness were ranked low. Medium indicates that two to three examples of awareness were provided, and high indicates extensive awareness based on four or more examples provided by participants.

Theories	Cohort 1			Cohort 2		
	Low	Medium	High	Low	Medium	High
CRT	40%	40%	20%	50%	50%	0
RR	50%	50%	0	75%	25%	0
CWS	60%	40%	0	50%	50%	0
CB	60%	20%	20%	50%	50%	0
EL	80%	20%	0	50%	50%	0

Table 5: The Knowledge of Racial Theories and Concepts by Cohorts 1 and 2

The majority of participants in both cohorts scored low or medium awareness of each of the theories. In Cohort 1, more participants scored low than medium for CWS, CB, and EL. Cohort 2 participants scored equally between low and medium among all concepts and theories except Racial Realism.

I also compared Cohort 1 and Cohort 2 participants on their awareness of systemic racism, their understanding of their own racial identity, and the skills they possessed to teach racially diverse students. A teacher's skill level would be defined as their expertise of the subject. I used the same low/medium/high ranking system, with participants who provided zero to one example of awareness ranked low, two to three examples ranked medium, and four or more examples ranked high.

Cohort	Low	Medium	High
Cohort 1	30%	20%	50%
Cohort 2	0	50%	50%

Table 6: Awareness of Systemic Racism by Cohorts 1 and 2

Cohort	Low	Medium	High
Cohort 1	30%	30%	40%
Cohort 2	0	25%	75%

Table 7: Awareness of Own Racial Identity by Cohorts 1 and 2

Cohort	Low	Medium	High
Cohort 1	50%	20%	30%
Cohort 2	50%	25%	25%

Table 8: Possess Skills Needed to Teach Racially Diverse Students by Cohorts 1 and 2

As reflected in Table 6, the majority of each cohort had medium to high levels of awareness of systemic racism. Cohort 1's rankings are consistent with the results shown in Figure 1, where 60% of the participants identified CRT, the overarching theory for this thesis. Cohort 2 also shows a relatively high level of systemic racial awareness, The cohorts differ in that Cohort 1 participants were able to identify Critical Race Theory, while Cohort 2 appears to have developed awareness through experience rather than through academic training.

The majority of Cohort 1 and half of Cohort 2 did not recognize Critical White Studies (CWS) as an academic theory, but eleven out of 14 participants had a medium to high awareness and could give examples of experiences from the perspective of a White

person. However, the examples did not show that they all were aware of their implicit biases and privileges as a White person.

Table 8 shows each cohort's self-assessment of the skills that the teachers possess to teach racially diverse students. In both cohorts, the majority of participants scored in the low category. Participants who scored in the medium to high categories gained skills through personal experiences, personal mentors, and friends, or through a master's or doctoral program.

Summary

This pilot study was composed of participants with a wide range of ages, experiences, educational, and personal backgrounds. I collected and analyzed quantitative and qualitative data to address this question: *What core knowledge, essential skills, and experiences do White teachers believe have effectively prepared them to teach racially diverse students?*

Based on my literature review and my own experience, I identified five concepts and theories that I interpreted as important for White teachers who teach racially diverse students to know. There were several themes that emerged during this study. First, none of the participants had full awareness of all the academic theories and concepts presented to them in my survey. Members of Cohort 1 were aware of some of them (those with a master's or a doctoral degree were most likely to be familiar with them). In addition, their awareness did not appear to be associated with how long they had been teaching. Members of Cohort 2 were less aware of the theories and concepts than Cohort 1, but similar to Cohort 1, the awareness they had was unrelated to their degrees.

Second, participants acquired their awareness in a variety of ways. Knowledge of CRT was acquired in all learning formats. Equity Literacy was most often learned in professional trainings and higher education. Participants learned about Colorblindness equally from academic courses and from informal discussions or readings outside the academic setting. Degree programs in education are starting to teach CRT, CWS, CB, and EL, but it seems they have yet to be consistent in systematically incorporating them into the curriculum, and one person reported hearing about RR in their academic courses. Cohort 2 had similar results to Cohort 1 in regards to higher education starting to teach CRT, CWS, CB and EL and where participants learned about the theories and concepts. Cohort 1 had a higher rate of learning about the theories and concepts through informal or personal discussions with friends, which is not surprising given their higher level of experience.

The majority of each cohort understood that systemic and institutionalized racism exists in the classroom, educational system, and society. Participants described race as a social construction and saw White perspectives and narratives as the norm. The participants who gave personal examples in their interviews of Whiteness, White privilege, and being a White teacher were describing the theme of Critical White Studies (even though they were unable to identify CWS as a theory). The participants who had a difficult time with some of the interview questions all made similar statements that led to examples of their guilt and fear. They were afraid that they might be labeled racist, on guard about what they say around discussions of race, unable to lead conversations about race without emotions taking over the discussion, or the chance that they might offend someone.

Participants in both cohorts whose self-assessment was that they possessed few skills needed to teach racially diverse students still had a medium-to-high awareness of the theories and concepts. Their challenge was that they didn't know what to do or how to proceed in implementing changes. The few participants who scored high on awareness of the concepts and theories and self-assessed possession of skills, had had racial equity mentors, personal experiences of racial equity in their lives, or a master's or doctoral degree.

In chapter five, recommendations will be given based on the quantitative and qualitative data that was found. I will present connections and insights that I drew from these data and discuss my reflections and my hope for ways this pilot study might be used in the future.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

Introduction and Overview

This chapter includes reflections on my experiences as a writer, researcher and learner; the connections that I made between the data and literature review; the limitations encountered during this pilot study; my recommendations based on the data; and how the results can be used. The central question investigated by this pilot study was "W*hat core knowledge, essential skills, and experiences do White teachers believe have effectively prepared them to teach racially diverse students?"*

My consideration of the results focused on connections to the racial concepts and theories that were studied in the literature review and for implications about professional development needed by current White teachers in the field.

This pilot study used a mixed-methods approach to gather data. In-person interviews collected qualitative data in the form of narratives and first-hand accounts from teachers in the field as they reflected on their personal and professional experiences. Quantitative data from an online survey provided information on how participants acquired their skills, knowledge and experience. I used two cohorts to compare whether years of teaching experience made a difference in how participants acquired their skills, knowledge, and experience.

Understanding as a writer, researcher and learner. The impetus for this pilot study was my growing awareness of inequities in educational systems. Through my

experience as a teacher and the relationships I built with students early in my career, I have come to recognize [how the many ways] marginalized students are adversely affected. In addition, I have realized that I only came to an understanding of my own racial identity in my adulthood. I wanted to know if other educators had similar or different awareness and skills related to racial theories and concepts, and when and how they acquired their awareness and skills.

The thesis process has helped me develop as a researcher and a writer. I now recognize the importance of academic research in multiple ways, such as 1) understanding the extent to which my research question had been previously investigated, 2) the significance of well-developed research instruments in interviews, and 3) the richness of interviewing subjects and collecting their narratives. My academic writing skills have improved during the development of this capstone, but I still have a lot of room to grow. As an arts teacher, I am primarily a visual learner, but I have gained a respect for and understanding of the discipline that academic writing requires.

Interviewing participants was my favorite research activity. It was interesting for me to hear participants' stories from personal experiences, listen to their beliefs about racial equity topics, and reflect on their experiences as classroom teachers. Interviewing my participants allowed me to better understand how they see themselves as White teachers and to dig deeper about their skills, knowledge and experiences.

As a White educator and life-long learner, I am particularly drawn to the topic of race and racism. I believe that racist ideology is morally wrong and I have the ability to stand up and make change. When I started immersing myself in racial equity work, I

knew it would be consuming, challenging, and difficult at times, but the experience has also allowed me to continue to learn and grow personally and as a racial equity leader.

Connections with the literature review

I chose Critical Race Theory (CRT) as my overarching theory for this study and as a focus of the literature review, because it effectively questions fundamental ideas that have been part of the normative society (Delgado and Stefancic, 2001). The theoretical focus of CRT is the legal and educational systems, and many concepts within CRT seem essential to me the development of White teachers who want to work with racially diverse students. Racial Realism, Critical White Studies, and Colorblindness are all embedded in CRT. The baseline knowledge of these concepts and theories allowed me to evaluate the level of awareness and understanding regarding race White teachers.

Another concept that I included in the literature review was Equity Literacy (EL) developed by Paul Gorski (2015). Although it was the newest of the racial concepts that I reviewed, the literature identifies tools for teachers to consider and practice EL. In the interviews, participants described resource gaps and skill deficits. They requested suggestions of tools to use in their curricula so they could become more racially conscious. There is not one magic bullet or a checklist for teachers, but EL offers practical resources and approaches for this need, and it allows teachers to reflect upon their perspectives and teach from a social justice lens in every content area.

The literature review enabled me to become familiar with critiques of these concepts and theories by scholars. The process also reminded me of how complex and underexplored this topic is. It exposed me to new ways of thinking about race, and confirmed why studying racial equity issues are so important to effective teacher

education, especially how race benefits some and marginalizes most due to the structures of our institutions.

Implication of Results

The results of this study have implications for three issues related to race and teacher education:

1. A lack of core knowledge related to racial theories and concepts;
2. A lack of essential skills to counter racial bias in the classroom and system;
3. The need for integration of personal experience.

Lack of Core Knowledge. My results indicate that higher education curricula do not consistently include CRT, RR, CWS, CB and EL. First-year teachers in my sample had more of an awareness of these theories from non-academic sources than from their formal education. However, more experienced teachers gained awareness from their professional development. While participants in both cohorts gave personal examples in interviews, they did not demonstrate comprehensive or fundamental academic knowledge.

My first recommendation, therefore, is that racial theories should be systematically taught to meet the need for uniform exposure to this knowledge, because graduates of education degree programs will most likely encounter students of color in their classrooms. If closing the achievement gap between White students and students from traditionally underrepresented groups is truly a goal for education, then the curricula for education degree students should include racial theories and concepts as a standard part of their preparation.

My second recommendation is that professional development for teachers should require racial equity topics. Without this mandate to prioritize racial equity issues higher education cannot rely on schools to implement racial equity in professional development. as a priority.

Awareness of CWS and RR was not often reported by the participants in this study. Given that the majority of the teacher workforce is White, knowledge of Critical White Studies is significant, not only because it supports racial identity development and reflection about relevant personal experiences. If White teachers do not reflect about the role of race in the development of their own identity, then it will be harder for them to understand their role in a racially diverse environment. It also will be more difficult for them to empathize with their students of color who experience oppressive systems and who are marginalized in these systems. It is emotionally exhausting and draining for students of color to be constantly bombarded with normative standards and have to navigate the systems that were not inherently built for them.

Lack of Essential Skills. My pilot study data showed that most White teachers do not have adequate skills to teach racially diverse students with a racial equity lens. Many of the White teachers in both cohorts said they did not know what to do to help or make changes in their sphere of influence. In interviews, some participants said they were afraid to talk about this topic, and some expressed a lack of confidence in navigating this topic in the classroom. Essentially, these teachers are at a loss for tools or resources that might assist them in addressing racial bias, as well as how to use these tools in a constructive, educational fashion. I suggest that this confusion is related to their not having a solid racial equity knowledge base. It is difficult to act when you are not well-

informed and trained to reflect on your own racial identity, which can bring a new level of awareness and confidence to the classroom.

Most participants knew of CB but did not know how to translate and apply that information in a teaching environment. Some participants provided examples of equity and literacy in their interviews, but they did not connect the EL concept to their examples.

I recommend that pre-service teachers and practicing teachers have an assigned mentor who has a well-developed racial equity lens. One of the participants was fortunate to have two mentors with this perspective. As a result, that participant had a high awareness and identifiable skillset to implement instructional and racial equity strategies in her classroom. Without a mentor, teachers will be significantly challenged to learn and practice behaviors that enable them to change personally and professionally.

Need for Integration of Personal Experience. The majority of participants (12 out of 14) reported personal experiences that would be useful in a racially diverse classroom. However, they were not able to integrate their personal experiences to make equitable changes in their teaching. Also, some expressed emotions such as fear of being called "racist" that can be tied to White guilt and keep White teachers from doing the necessary racial equity work.

In the literature review, affinity groups were described as a way for those who identify as White to process and reflect on their experiences. Affinity groups are helpful because, often, White people lag behind people of color in terms of racial identity growth. I recommend affinity groups to help White teachers move past guilt when they make a mistake, because mistakes are an inherent part of personal and professional

growth. Affinity groups can support White teachers to reflect and recognize what could be changed in the future. Scholars studying racism have advocated this approach for many years, "Acknowledging our own racism and that of society, we must mobilize for change, not out of guilt for the past, but out of commitment to the future. We need not waste time with self-incrimination or verbal abuse from others; rather, let us move deliberately to discover and deal with real causes and solutions" (Schulze, 1973).

Challenges and Limitations of the study. A special challenge that I encountered during my study design was District policies relating to research. Due to a District policy prohibiting graduate student research, I had to submit an appeal to the District's Research Committee for permission to conduct my specific research and had to justify the research's relevance to the District. After the appeal was approved, I had to complete an application to conduct my pilot study and waited several weeks for the District's decision. The Research Committee also required a $150 fee to conduct my study, which was an unexpected financial burden (many of my graduate student colleagues were not required to pay a fee by their research sites).

A limitation of my study was created by my difficulty in recruiting participants for Cohort 2. The District would not provide names of first-year White teachers through Human Resources or the Peer Assistant Review program due to the privacy of the employees. I asked individual District employees for assistance in recommending first-year White teachers, which resulted in the sample size of Cohort 2 being much smaller then Cohort 1.

In addition the time period I had to recruit new teachers was challenging. I wanted them to have a few months of experience before I introduced my pilot study to them;

however, recruiting participants too close to the holidays was undesirable because it is a busy time of year. So I tried to identify as many participants as possible during the period from October 1-January 1, but I was only able to recruit four participants. While information from Cohort 2 was useful, 10 participants would have given me richer data.

Another beneficial addition to the interviews would have been a few questions that would ask participants to describe the difference between equity and equality. This distinction would help me to assess if participants truly understood EL.

Finally, in retrospect, I would have wanted more time to conduct the pilot study in order to have expanded my second cohort. Clearly, the demands of conducting research were challenging in light of the time constraints associated with teaching full-time.

Recommendations

[1]This pilot study is important to the field of education because the preliminary results indicate that White teachers' awareness of racial theories is not enough to fully prepare them to equitably teach a racially diverse classroom. [2] Undergraduate and graduate students in education degree programs need to have racial equity theories and concepts incorporated systematically in their course of study because graduates may not gain this knowledge after they leave school. [3] Degree programs should include RR and CWS, which were found to be lacking participants' knowledge.

[4]While it is important that White teachers are exposed to background knowledge, theories, and concepts of racism and racial equity, this knowledge alone is not sufficient for White teachers to feel prepared to teach racially diverse students. [5] Once teachers understand and have an awareness of racial concepts and theories, they can acquire skills that allow them to integrate anti-bias approaches into their practice [6]

Learning and pronouncing all students' names correctly, integrating lessons that incorporate absent narratives, and inviting guests that are reflective of the students' lived experience are just a few anti-bias strategies.

[7]White teachers must be proactive and not reactive towards change in regards to racial issues. [8] Developing one's racial identity is important if White teachers want to be an anti-racism ally. [9]When this work becomes difficult, they will have the fundamental knowledge about racism that enables them to continue work on the issue and not quit.

It is important that White teachers have long-term mentors with a racial equity lens, not just a cooperating teacher for a short time during their student teaching. Also, continuously developing racial equity skills and knowledge must be built into all phases of professional development, not just racial equity trainings a few times a year. Racial equity should be built into the observation standards at the District level, so that way supportive feedback can be given when teachers are observed by instructional specialists, in the same way that feedback on other standards is required in order to help the educator grow personally and professionally.

When teachers gain skills, knowledge, and experiences to build their racial equity lens, they will be enabled to work on racial justice issues and not quit when the work becomes difficult. Equally important, their students will likely have a better experience. They will be able to include content in their curriculum, daily lessons, and discussions that will, hopefully, carry over into their students' lives and allow a more meaningful experience so that they feel connected and valued during their educational career.

Lastly, both new and experienced teachers in this study reported the pressure to focus on classroom management in their first few years of teaching. If racial equity is at the center of their curriculum and personal expectations, then teachers will be able to build authentic relationships, getting to know the whole student as much as possible. I believe that managing a classroom will be easier, because when students are aware of this relationship building and know that their teacher cares about them will be more engaged.

Use of results

I plan to share my findings broadly, with higher education programs, school districts, principals, racial equity coaches, and my colleagues. I would like to continue to expand upon this pilot study by increasing the sample size and incorporating a section that examines the awareness of faculty at the university level and administrators at the K-12 level. I would also look at curriculum components at the university level to see what race-related concepts, theories, and practice skills are studied.

Lastly, I would like to submit an article to an educational journal so my results and recommendations could be read and discussed by a broader audience.

Summary

As my thesis comes to a close, I want to reflect about my experience as a researcher, writer, and the pilot study itself. While a third and fourth cohort consisting of administration from K-12 schools and faculty from higher education are not part of my pilot study, it is my hope that this pilot study inspires future research that will examine these additional dimensions. Future findings could spur program changes within districts and universities to better incorporate racial equity theories and concepts into their curriculum, along with helping teachers and education students engage in strategic racial

equity development to build personal consciousness. As our country's educational policies and practices evolve, White teachers, along with administrators and those who educate teachers, must take a long, hard look at their practice, examine their biases, discover and reflect on their racial identity, and come to an understanding of their privilege.

My growing racial awareness began less than ten years ago, and my research reminds me that the work for racial equity in educational institutions is far from finished. My role as a White anti-racism leader is relatively new, and I still have much to learn. I need to continue to educate myself, including contributing to future research in this area and continuously examining my practices, thoughts, and biases. When I feel discouraged or hesitant to speak up, I need to remind myself that I have the privilege to give up while others do not.

This capstone reaffirms my hope that White teachers will

- continue to reflect about who they are and what they teach without fear or recrimination;
- ask questions that build an awareness of racial equity issues and an understanding of what it means to be a White ally;
- hold others accountable so that lasting changes will occur in our systems and those who are marginalized will be treated equitably;
- use the tools and practice the skills they learn while recognizing mistakes that can help us learn and grow.

Lastly, I hope that teacher preparation programs and school districts make racial equity a priority rather than an option. It is time that we walk the talk in order to build bridges, not walls.

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Appendix A

Pre-Survey Questions

Name_____

1. Is this the first year of your teaching career? Yes No

2. If you have been teaching more than four years, please state the number of years you have been teaching. _____

3. What level of education do you have? Where did you obtain your degree? Please fill in the space(s) that best fits your answer(s).

   ___Associates degree from_____

   ___Bachelor degree from_____

   ___Masters degree from_____

   ___Doctorate degree from_____

   ___Other from_____

4. What subject(s) do you currently teach?
   _____

5. Do you have other licenses? If so, please state what license(s) you hold.

   _____
   _____
   _____

6. How do you identify by race?
   _____

Have you heard of:	Mark **Yes** or **No** if you have heard of the theory/Concept.	If you marked **Yes**, describe how you heard of or learned the theory, for example, in your academic training, professional development, or another type of program.	Describe the form in which you heard or learned the theory, for example, lecture, reading assignment, written assignment, workshop/conference, other (specify).
Critical Race Theory			
Racial Realism			
Critical White Studies			
Colorblindness			
Equity Literacy			

Appendix B

Interview Questions

1. What does racism mean to you in the context of 1) our educational system? 2) the classroom? What has been an impact on you as a White teacher?
2. What experiences, if any, have caused you to reflect on your own racial identity?
3. Are there an knowledge, skills, or experiences that you believe have helped to prepare you to teach racially diverse students?

If YES: A) Please describe these elements and how you were exposed to them

B) In what way(s) did these elements help prepare you to teach racially diverse students?

C) How have you integrated that learning into your teaching?

D) How could you have been better prepared to teach racially diverse students?

If NO)

A) How could you have been better prepared to teach racially diverse students?

Appendix C

Letter of Consent for Teachers with 5 Years or More Experience

May 2016

Dear _____,

I am a graduate student working on an advanced degree in education at Hamline University, St. Paul, Minnesota. As part of my graduate work, I plan to conduct research with White secondary teachers who have 5 or more years of teaching experience in our district from July-September . The purpose of this letter is to request your participation. This research is public scholarship the abstract and final product will be cataloged in Hamline's Bush Library Digital Commons, a searchable electronic repository and that it may be published or used in other ways.

The topic of my master's capstone (thesis) *what core knowledge; essential skills and experiences White teachers believe have effectively prepared them to teach racially diverse students?* I plan to send out a survey to collect basic demographic information, and then interview White teachers about their perspectives and experiences. The interviews will be recorded and last about 30-45 minutes. The interview questions will be provided ahead of time.

There is little to no risk if you choose to be interviewed. All results will be confidential and anonymous. Pseudonyms for the district, schools, and participants will be used. The interviews will be conducted at a place and time that are convenient for you. The interview recordings will be destroyed after completion of my study.

Participation in the interview is voluntary, and, at any time, you may decline to be interviewed or to have your interview content deleted from the capstone without negative consequences. If you choose to participate interviews can take place at a quiet coffee shop, local library, or location that best fits your needs.

I have received approval from the School of Education at Hamline University and from our district office to conduct this study. My results might be included in an article in a professional journal or a session at a professional conference. In all cases, your identity and participation in this study will be confidential.

If you agree to participate, keep this page. Fill out the duplicate agreement to participate on page two and return it to me by mail or copy the form in an email to me no later than July 15th, 2016. If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Cristina Benz

2341 University Avenue #103

Saint Paul, MN 55114

319.981.7308

Cbenz01@hamline.edu

I have received the letter about your research study for which you will be interviewing White teachers with 5+ years of experience to understand what skills, knowledge, and experience they have to teach in racially diverse schools. I understand that being interviewed poses little to no risk for me, that my identity will be protected, and that I may withdraw from the interview portion of the project at any time without negative consequences.

_____ Signature

_____Name Printed

_____ Date

Appendix D

Letter of Consent for New Teachers

October 2016

Dear _____,

I am a graduate student working on an advanced degree in education at Hamline University, St. Paul, Minnesota. As part of my graduate work, I plan to conduct research with White secondary teachers who have just graduated in May of 2016 and will begin teaching in the fall of 2016. The research will begin in our district from Mid-October-January. The purpose of this letter is to request your participation. This research is public scholarship the abstract and final product will be cataloged in Hamline's Bush Library Digital Commons, a searchable electronic repository and that it may be published or used in other ways.

The topic of my master's capstone (thesis) is *what core knowledge; essential skills and experiences White teachers believe have effectively prepared them to teach racially diverse students?* I plan to send out a survey to collect basic demographic information, and then interview White teachers about their perspectives and experiences. The interviews will be recorded and last about 30-45 minutes. The interview questions will be provided ahead of time.

There is little to no risk if you choose to be interviewed. All results will be confidential and anonymous. Pseudonyms for the district, schools, and participants will be used. The interviews will be conducted at a place and time that are convenient for you. The interview recordings will be destroyed after completion of my study.

Participation in the interview is voluntary, and, at any time, you may decline to be interviewed or to have your interview content deleted from the capstone without negative consequences. . If you choose to participate interviews can take place at a quiet coffee shop, classroom, or location that best fits your needs.

I have received approval from the School of Education at Hamline University and from our district office to conduct this study. My results might be included in an article in a professional journal or a session at a professional conference. In all cases, your identity and participation in this study will be confidential.

If you agree to participate, keep this page. Fill out the duplicate agreement to participate on page two and return it to me by mail or copy the form in an email to me no later than October 1st, 2016. If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Cristina Benz

2341 University Avenue #103

Saint Paul, MN 55114

319.981.7308

Cbenz01@hamline.edu

I have received the letter about your research study for which you will be interviewing White teachers who graduated in May 2016 to understand what skills, knowledge, and experience they have to teach in racially diverse schools. I understand that being interviewed poses little to no risk for me, that my identity will be protected, and that I may withdraw from the interview portion of the project at any time without negative consequences.

_____ Signature

_____Name Printed

_____ Date